THE BOOKMAN

Edited by Seward Collins

JULY, 1930 VOL. LXXI; NO. 4

THE LITERARY HISTORIANS

by Norman Foerster

The notion that literary values are relative to literary periods, that the literature of a period is primarily an expression and a symptom of the time, is so natural to us now that we can hardly detach our minds from it.—*T. S. Eliot*

When our critics have not been impressionists, they have commonly been historians. While impressionistic criticism, requiring little knowledge or effort of thought, has attracted the rank and file of our slapdash journalists, historical criticism, requiring much knowledge and orderly thought, has attracted some of our more serious journalists and virtually the entire body of scholars in our colleges and universities. Although these historians have often displayed by the way an appreciative or sceptical impressionism, their central task has been the study of literature in relation to the endless permutations of its environment.

For a hundred years, critics and scholars alike have tended to view literature as a supplement to history. History itself they conceived as a record of the economic, social, institutional and political forces of human civilization in their manifold interplay and alteration, and literature as a reflection of these forces. A great writer, it is held, does not write what he wishes to write; he writes what his age gives him to write. If he endeavors to oppose the spirit of his age, he is lost; but if he can unite himself with the central urge of his time, can devote his vital power to expressing the passions governing the society to which he belongs, he will achieve an artistic record of the life of his own age, which is different from the life of all other ages. A new "historical sense" has swept away the old assumption that men in various ages are alike just because they are all men, and it has swept away the corollary to that assumption, that excellence in literature is at all times the same. Instead of speaking of an absolute beauty in literature determined by Homer or Aristotle, we now speak of an absolutely relative beauty determined by the changing interests and ideals of humanity. Increasingly the object of criticism has been, not to judge literature by universal standards, but to understand the productions of the different ages. As M. Mornet, for example, has said, "Literary history

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is not separated from general history. Since Sainte-Beuve and Taine, our concern is not with pursuing sterile dogmatic discussions, but with knowing what the work of art is, how it is born and takes its place among the forces which incessantly modify the soul and human societies (*les forces qui modifient incessament l'âme et les sociétés humaines*)".

I

It is necessary to glance farther back, however, than to Sainte-Beuve and Taine. Our preoccupation with the historical sense, our shift of emphasis from man himself to the *forces* which incessantly change him, is a result of the general modern abandonment of humanism and religion for naturism—that vast revolution, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of which the French Revolution may be termed an external incident. When the ordering of life and thought by authority was destroyed by rationalism, the humanistic and Christian traditions, supported by authority, appeared to be discredited, and prestige more and more passed to a new outlook on life, that of naturism: a name embracing both the romantic movement and the scientific movement.

The inner unity of the romantic and the scientific movements may be seen, for instance, in the relation of the idea of historical relativity that underlies the romantic movement and the idea of organic evolution that has inspired modern science. As an American literary scholar has said, "In the latter half of the eighteenth century there arose an entirely new conception of history and the historical process. It is the discovery of the naïve in contrast to the artificial, the sudden realization of the value and importance of the national as opposed to the abstract classical type of humanity, which causes the rise of the new conception of history. . . . Humanity has developed in its diversity and beauty in every clime and under every sky. For the beautiful is no mere abstraction, but variously reveals itself in life. It is the historical point of view from which we comprehend historical variety, through which we perceive and enjoy the beautiful in all its manifestations. . . . It is through Romanticism primarily that the historical method gained its sway".* Rousseau was the first great spokesman of the conviction that the natural is superior to the artificial, that when the individual is natural—obedient to the law of his own genius—he is organically unique and admirable; and Rousseau's German follower, Herder, was the first great spokesman of the idea of cultural relativity, by virtue of which each age and country that obeys the law of its own genius is organically unique and admirable. As the new absorption in the natural man drove romantic thinkers and dreamers into the primitive past, so the new absorption in the national genius drove them into the hitherto despised Middle Age—to its faith, its art, its vernacular literatures. From this interest in origins and growth on the part of the romanticists, it is no great step to that interest which later animated the scientists and which made of evolution an accepted hypothesis. As Professor Brett has put it, "The biological movement in the sciences is equivalent to the romantic movement in literature".†

Romanticism and science together prepared the way for a virtually new kind of literary criticism. The first great critic who strikes us as thoroughly modern is Sainte-Beuve, who added to the generous sympathies of romanticism the industrious exactitude of science. "To be in literary history and in criticism a disciple of Bacon," as he himself observed, "seemed to me the need of the times." Concerned with understanding and explaining more than with judging, he studied not only literary works but their writers, the influences upon them of heredity, education and environment; he availed him-

* Julius Goebel, address of the President, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 1915.

† G. S. Brett, *Psychology, Ancient and Modern*, p. 192.

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self of every resource open to the psychologist and historian of souls in order to unlock the heart of his subjects, producing, in the end, a truly remarkable "natural history of intellects and temperaments". Then came Taine, disciple of Sainte-Beuve and Hegel, who created a definite system of the laws to which authors are subject. "You may consider man," he announced, "as an animal of superior species who produces philosophies and poems about as silkworms produce their cocoons and bees their cells." Had not the time arrived to apply the Baconian method, rigorously, to the human species? "Science draws near at last and draws near to man; it has passed the visible and palpable world of stars, plants and stones to which men had disdainfully confined it; it is laying hold of the soul, having at its disposal all the keen and exact instruments of which three hundred years of experiment have proved the precision and measured the scope." As an exercise in the application of scientific method to the human soul, he wrote his famous *History of English Literature*, in which he conceived of the work of art as the joint product of three forces, the Race, the Place and the Time. It is not for the scientific critic of literature to praise or to blame, any more than it is for the scientific student of nature to praise or to blame. "Criticism," he says, "proceeds like botany, which studies with equal interest at one moment the orange tree, at another the pine; at one moment the laurel, and at another the birch; it is itself a sort of botany applied not to plants but to the works of man." In the flush of the scientific spirit of the age, Taine suffered his zeal to mislead him into premature and rigid generalizations. But at least he made it impossible for any important critic after him to deal with literature *in vacuo*, regardless of its historical relations. It is less true to say that his formula has been rejected, than that it has been endlessly revised and subtilized by his successors, above all, by his highly trained academic successors in Europe and America.

This is not the place for discussion of academic erudition in the field of literature.* After all, the public shows a right instinct in conceiving that criticism and scholarship are, at present two things, and that accordingly criticism is an activity outside and scholarship an activity inside the university. The typical scholar is well content with his historical learning; austerely factual and objective, at least in theory, he disparages all criticism as, at bottom, subjective and impressionistic. Obedient to the scientific spirit, he constantly seeks to shut out that personal equation which is prized by the impressionist as the very basis of criticism. And yet the faith that he professes and the faith that he lives by are often at variance, for in practice he does not wholly repress his preferences, nor apparently wish wholly to repress them. These preferences are commonly romantic. As Professor Goebel gratefully acknowledges, "No other great intellectual movement of subsequent years has had so powerful an influence upon the development of our studies as has Romanticism", so that it should surprise no one to find that "scholars are trying to revive the great and fruitful ideas of the Romanticists"† and opposing the ideas of the humanists.

II

Although it is generally assumed that a vast abyss separates scholarship and journalism, they are at present aiming at the same object. While alien in method and in spirit, and often mutually exclusive in their subject matter—the one concerning itself with the past as if the present did not exist, the other concerning itself with the present as if the past did not exist—scholarship and journalism in twentieth-century America are fundamentally united in their preoccupation with history. There is no great gap between the academic historian who records the lit-

* I have dealt with this subject in *The American Scholar*, University of North Carolina Press, 1929, urging a reintegration of scholarship and criticism.

† Julius Goebel, *op. cit.*

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erary phenomena of the more remote past and the journalistic historian who reports the literary phenomena of that recent past which we call the present. I am disregarding, of course, the impressionistic journalists, who measure literature by their personal moods; I am speaking of those more serious journalists who endeavor to transcend their personal limitations by considering literature in the light of the forces animating contemporary civilization, especially in their own country. While the scholars explain past literature relatively to the age and land from which it emerged, these journalists explain present literature relatively to the modern world and the national genius. As journalists, they rightly concern themselves with *le jour*, reporting the literary news of the day—the external gossip if they are feeble reporters, the internal goings-on if they are penetrating observers.

The best of our recent or living journalists, significantly, have undergone an elaborate academic discipline in literary history: men like Carl Van Doren, Ph.D. (Columbia), Stuart P. Sherman, Ph.D. (Harvard), and Henry S. Canby, Ph.D. (Yale). All three, after receiving the stamp of the doctorate, proceeded to engage in teaching. Perceiving, however, as Mr. Van Doren says, that "the universities in the United States no longer put such a shoulder to the wheel of creative literature as they put there half a century ago", that "the scholars spend their talents, often admirable, on antiquarian research, but rarely know or care enough to encourage, interpret, or preserve the best that is being done from year to year", these journalistic historians turned more and more away from the usual academic study of the best (and much else) that has been thought and said, to a freer study and propagation of the best (and much else) that is being done from year to year and day to day. More and more unsparingly, they put a shoulder to the wheel of creative literature.

Of this rededication, the most dramatic example is Stuart P. Sherman, one-time editor of a minor Elizabethan dramatist and contributor to *Modern Language Notes*, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, and *Materialen zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas*, and finally editor of the New York *Herald Tribune Books*. The divagations that he pursued in the interim—his "coming out" for the humanism of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, his championship of Puritanism and Democracy as the bases of the American genius, his long service in education and academic administration, his decision to leave his watch-tower at the University of Illinois and immerse himself in the electric currents of life in the metropolis—these do not concern us here, however much they reveal of the problems of contemporary criticism.* What does concern us is the conception of criticism in *Critical Woodcuts*, a collection of essays from *Books*, in which Sherman sets forth the creed of the historical journalist, the historian of the present. After dismissing his own inconsistencies with something of Emerson's jauntiness, he boldly maintains that his primary task is reportorial. "The first duty of a commentator on current literature, as it appears to me, is to present a fairly full and veracious report of what is going on. . . . His first duty is not to exploit his own predilections; it is rather to understand the entire 'conspiracy' of forces involved in the taste of his own day. What is 'important' now and never may be so again has a charm for him which he would think it a kind of baseness and disloyalty not to admit and record." Here we have a creed which, *mutatis mutandis*, is identical with that of the historical scholar. Like the scholar, he is to narrate history, to be thorough and accurate ("full" and "veracious"), to subdue rather than cultivate the personal equation, to understand and explain

* They may be viewed in detail in *Life and Letters of Stuart P. Sherman*, 2 vols. (1929), by Jacob Zeitlin and Homer Woodbridge, a valuable contribution to the study of American literature of the twentieth century and a stimulating book for readers trying to work toward a critical position.

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rather than judge, to demonstrate what is important in its time, to respond to the charm of the present as the antiquarian responds to that of the past. Like the scholar, he gazes, fascinated, upon the flowing stream of Time. "He conceives of literature perhaps as a river, himself as a scout seeking for the main channel of intellectual and emotional activity in his own tract of time, recurring constantly to the point where the full rush of living waters comes in from the past, and eagerly searching for the point where the flood breaks out of the backwater and through the dams, and streams away into the future. He is always sounding and essaying to discover where the water is deepest now. He tries to characterize the most promising navigators, their crafts, their cargoes. When he concerns himself with historical figures, he seizes upon those who, by reason of some vital congruity, are felt by us as 'modern' and pertinent to our present occasions".*

Recalling that in his earlier criticism he has said much of "the good life", Sherman goes on to declare, in terms which the scientific scholar would readily comprehend, that a true vision of the good life is obscured by "too much theory about it and too many preoccupations", for "The best criticism is of a concrete and inductive habit. The wise critic attempts on all possible occasions to keep his theoretical and didactic mouth shut and all his other faculties open, here, there, and everywhere, for all the reports and rumors of positive charm and joy in things and people, as the most indubitable tokens that they are participators in some degree of that 'good life' which he is seeking". Through open-minded exploration of this sort, he has learned that "patient search usually discovers some refreshing virtue wherever there has been exhibited any unusual display of energy"—though this may be, he presently acknowledges, merely a "blind faith". In the book thus prefaced, Sherman turns out to be less the observer who sees his subjects steadily and whole, than the advocate or optimist bent upon making a case for them. At times he goes so far that his appreciation is indistinguishable from the ordinary publisher's "blurb", as when he declares that Don Marquis's *The Dark Hours* "should affect us as the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles affected the Greeks".*

One of the most deliberately composed woodcuts is the one placed first in the volume, "an introduction to the works of Mr. Anderson for the benefit of correspondents who inquire: 'When will the country begin to sicken of this flood of literary rot from the corn and hog belt?' " As advocate or optimist, Sherman proves himself able to stomach all of Sherwood Anderson's faults and shortcomings, regarding which he is silent, and dilates upon his six distinguished gifts. One of these is his fine workmanship, illustrated by the first chapter, only four pages long, of *Dark Laughter*, "as consummate a work of art as the first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*, which also occupies four pages; and the rest of the book is keyed up to that pitch". Another gift is that "he is tremendously American and glad of it". Another is that "he possesses 'high seriousness' ". Still another is that he is "a genuine mystic", comparable with the author of the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divine Comedy*—works to which Sherman owes, as he candidly tells us, his ability to understand "this ex-advertising man from Chicago". Laudation of this sort, heralded at the time as proof of Sherman's insight and tolerance and courage, is incomparably more absurd than Lord Jeffrey's famous attack on Wordsworth's *Excursion* beginning "This will never do"—an assertion supported with strong arguments. Equivalent laudation Sherman bestowed upon Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, and indeed upon the realistic-naturalistic movement of

* A second collection of essays from *Books* was appropriately named *The Main Stream*.

* Thus in *Books*; in *Critical Woodcuts* he modified the affirmation, not too happily, by adding the word "religiously". *Life and Letters*, II, 711.

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the 1920's as a whole. As he declared in his address before the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he had the privilege of living in an age "full of men and women bent on exploring and reporting the truth, . . . great areas of repressed truth about their own lives and about the lives of the American people". We may find our keenest pleasure, he cried warmly, in "recognizing and applauding the various aspects of the great literary movement which is taking place under our eyes, giving us on the whole the stimulating sense that ours is one of the valorous and encouraging ages of the world". Had he not met his premature death shortly after this celebration of a movement already disintegrating, had he lived into the fourth and fifth decades of the century, he might have pronounced the twenties not merely vital but also superficial and found a later time one of the valorous and encouraging ages of the world, for his whole cast of mind had become enthusiastically contemporaneous. He lived in history; he lived with history. Whereas the academic literary historian, professing to be purely scientific, inherits the ideas of a romantic past, a journalistic historian like Sherman, professing to be faithfully reportorial, espouses the changing ideas of his own time, urges the validity of the forces which successively and incessantly modify the soul and human societies.

III

Sherman came to New York, says Mr. Canby, "as a student, to establish living contacts with contemporary literature and with men and women and the typical life from which the new books were springing. As a critic and writer he came in order to reach a wider and more various range of adult minds". His aims, in other words, were to do what Mr. Canby himself was already doing and has now been doing for a decade. The typical scouting reporter of the movements of the stream of literature is Henry S. Canby, who has rounded out ten years of service as editor of the *Literary Review* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

Mr. Canby has more than once explained the function of a review of this sort. An offspring of the daily newspaper, the literary weekly has the task of presenting and interpreting "the news of literature". Unlike the journal of opinion, such as the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, it does not apply to the modern world a special social philosophy; its subject is literature and the backgrounds of literature, and its interpretation is liberal instead of propagandist. To be sure, the staff of editors will have individual convictions, since "men choose their philosophy according to their temperament", but their minds in the main will be flexible, and they will rely largely upon contributions from the "experts" outside—critics, scholars, and scientists, men of distinction rather than of uniform opinion.

If it is hard to assure adequate sympathies in a carefully selected small group of reviews, it is wholly impossible in a large group, so that such a journal can only "hope to attain truth by averages as the scientists do, rather than by dogmatic edict". The review that criticizes a given book must itself be criticized by the reader—a formidable duty rendered somewhat easier by the signature of the reviewer, if the reader is fortunate enough to recognize his name and bias. As a further guarantee of neutrality, the journal must open its columns for the publication of protests and rebuttals. Instead of requiring conformity to a standard of its own, it voices the opinion of many minds, each able in its own way but often fundamentally in conflict with other minds. Instead of presenting an official judgment, it invites its readers to a battle of the wits. "The fight is in the open, we know the adversaries, and the final judgment, whether to salute a victor or condemn an imposter, is ours." This program is said to provide, on the whole, the best means of telling the busy and uncritical public what books are worth; it makes "a liaison between

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the reader and his book" and promotes "education of the reading American mind". It provides the book news of the day, expert opinions of authors and their writings, and advice, direct or indirect, as to the Book-of-the-Week. A natural extension of this program was the establishment of the Book-of-the-Month Club and similar organizations, which developed from the literary review as the literary review had developed from the newspaper.

Whether or not this is the best possible program for a literary review, the value of the review will finally depend upon the editor himself, who perhaps writes more of its pages than any other one person, and who in any case registers his personality and point of view in his many editorials and essays and in his choice of "expert" contributors. What, then, are the qualifications of Mr. Canby as a journalistic critic of literature?

By virtue of his academic training and his long association with the department of English at Yale, Mr. Canby has a command of the history of literature incomparably superior to that of the ordinary journalist. He is familiar with the scholar—a scientist "ruthless in his accuracy, a stickler for intellectual discipline, a man like Browning's grammarian, wanting to know, no end to the knowing". He is familiar with the achievements of the scholar, as when he says, "Yes, we have settled Hoti's business (and a side-street affair it has proved): it is time to take up Pindar and Æschylus and the life and art for which Hoti was made". And if he himself does not take up Pindar and Æschylus, he does something else that he reproaches the professors for not doing: he remembers that the continuity of literary history includes the twentieth century and accordingly reads the new books and studies the trends of literature in the present. In knowledge of contemporary letters Mr. Canby has perhaps no equal in America today.

In estimating the value of contemporary letters, he deliberately avoids what he terms a "fundamental" criticism, that "austerer" criticism which always insists upon the best. For, as he avers, "In the year in which we live—and it is sometimes necessary to remind the austerer critic that we always live in the present—there are a hundred books, of poetry, of essays, of fiction, which are by no means of the first rank and yet are highly important, if only as news of what the world, in our present, is thinking and feeling. They cannot be judged, all of them, on the top plane of perfect excellence; and if we judge them all on any other plane, good, better, best get inextricably mixed". In other words, the aims of the journalist in the field of books is to give readers the news, news less superficial than that recorded in the newspapers, news that may be profoundly interesting to readers now even if dull hereafter. For there are books as well as people of importance in their own day, and one must know them if one is to be fully alive. The prime duty of the journalist it would perhaps be better to term not literary criticism but "literary definition".

In *Definitions* (1922) Mr. Canby explained: "I use definition in no pedantic sense. I mean, in general, logical definition where the class or *genus* of the thing to be described—whether best-selling novel or sentimental tendency—is first made clear, and then its *differentia*, its differences from the type analyzed and assorted". What this means he made plainer in *Definitions, Second Series* (1924), when he asserted that the critic's task is "to name what our authors are doing" (whether the typical get-rich-quick story, romantic narrative, naturalistic novel, etc.), and then, accepting the *genre*, taking the author on his own terms, to consider "the success or failure of what he himself has actually set out to accomplish".* In case the critic frowns upon naturalism, that fact is his private and otherwise irrelevant concern, for "if a man sets out to do naturalism, by the

* Superficially, this appears to repeat the theory of Croce. The basis, however, is the *genre*, which Croce condemns as academic and unreal.

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laws of naturalism let him be judged". The same must be said of the types within naturalism: "If, instead of drawing Tom Jones or Mr. Pickwick, it is the submerged personality of a neurotic woman that interests the writer", we must allow the writer his interest and ask only whether he has succeeded in his aim—"the thing can certainly be done, and it is certainly neither more nor less worth doing". As a definer, the critic is concerned with all the types that writers choose to cultivate, not only those in high repute, such as the ambitious novel that invites the supreme tests, but also those whose standing is inferior, such as the novel intended only to yield a pleasant hour.

For example, suppose that we judge on the highest plane *If Winter Comes*. "It fails miserably. For Mr. Hutchinson stacks the cards. He gives his hero his way and his salvation, after much suffering, by a series of lucky accidents. He destroys the problem he creates, by forging an answer. But this novel should not be judged on the highest plane. It is not a tragedy, it is a romance. It belongs to the plane below, the plane of stories told to meet the secret desires of humanity, which have little to do with reality, and are quite oblivious to fact. On this plane *If Winter Comes* ranks highly, for it is poignantly told, there is life in its characters, and truth in the best of its scenes. Definition saves us from calling a good novel great; it spares us the unnecessary error of calling a good and readable story bad because it is not a triumph of consistent art." Let the critic of contemporary letters be content, therefore, "to set books upon their planes and assort them into their categories. . . . This is elementary work, which may lead the critic only to the threshold" of criticism, but it is the most useful thing he can do in a time when serious criticism is unheard in "the irresponsible hullabaloo of commercial appreciation", a time when publishers with their blurbs confuse all standards and hack reviewers indulge in wholesale, superlative praise and dispraise.

This process of definition is also historical. In a suggestive passage Mr. Canby points out that "in any given moment at least three phases of literary time exist side by side. There is past time continued and bearing with it the thought and imagination of the last era, in which, in a literary sense, many readers have their only beings. . . . There is also, of course, present time, especially in the upper currents of contemporary literature which are hurried and ruffled by the events of the day, the prejudices, emotions, and interest of the moment. . . . And again there is time which, if not literally future, is future in its realization. In this future tense are being written the formative works which will become current literature only when they and the books they influence are read so widely as to become an integral part of civilization".

Turbid indeed is the "steady flow" of the river of literature, and to distinguish its constituent waters the critic must know the recent past, sympathize with the present, and even define the near future. Movements, like single books, call for definition. "When the current of taste of some new generation that overflows conventions and washes forward, or backward, into regions long unlaved, is viewed as a current, its direction plotted, its force estimated, its quality compared, why that is definition." Elsewhere Mr. Canby employs fluid metaphors drawn from biology, as when he speaks of "that area of literature in which blood runs warmly today", or of "the growing tissue where the sap is running now. That part of the literary tree may not be the most perfect, but at every present moment it is important, for there *our* life is stirring, there is the point at which we are living between the future and the past". Like many other modernists, Mr. Canby also speaks of "vigor", or "vitality", of "the impulse of the age", as if these were in themselves excellent, as when he says, "It is no crime to be romantic—it is a virtue, if that is the impulse of the age", or, "Apparently we have needed a strong dose of psychological

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realism (we are nearly cured) and got it, which proves neither that psychological novels are better than any other kind nor that the critics are wrong in recommending them". At bottom, his theory is simply that of historical relativity or indifferentism.

His practice, however, is often inconsistent with his theory. Employing the loose and abrupt accent of modern speech, revealing a mind acute, provocative, astute in tactics, fertile in ideas, Mr. Canby has again and again written editorials and essays that transcend his too-modest theory. Writing on "The Young Romantics", for example (those autobiographical realists who wish to elude the restraints of circumstance), he does not condemn them directly for being romantics, but indirectly for being wasteful romantics. "Waste," he points out, "has always been the romantic vice—waste of emotion, waste of words, the waste that comes from easy profusion of sentiment and the formlessness that permits it." Romantics, new style, like the author of *Main Street*, have a vision strained and aslant, a horrid fascination by the ugly, so that "the things that these writers love in life often they never reach until the last chapter, and about them they have little to say, being exhausted by earlier virulence"—a remark worthy of Dr. Johnson's conversation. In another passage Mr. Canby commends to modern creative writers an equivalent of his own art of definition, as a remedy for vague objectives. "Many modern novels of the better class," he observes, "and a great many modern poems, seem to me awash and wallowing like derelicts on the high seas. They are successful enough in this, excellent in that, but they get nowhere, because the writers had felt the emotion that made them, or suffered the experience, but never defined it in terms of all emotion, all experience, never considered its end. The three dots . . . of modern literature are significant." In a similar vein he declares that "art, which must interpret, must therefore be coherent, whatever may be the superficial appearance of life. It is true that the coherence of life is only a hypothesis, but it is a hypothesis concomitant with the existence of man as a rational and self-respecting being, and art, if it is to be human, must support the theory". This is why, in another essay, to quote one more passage, Mr. Canby occasionally finds it necessary to survey his flowing river from a great height: "Those who seek literary consolation are by no means to be urged away from their own literature, which contains a perfect picture of our feverish times, and has implicit within it the medicine for our ills, if they are curable. But they may be advised to go again and more often than is now the fashion to the writings of those men who found, for their own time, a real significance, who could formulate a saving doctrine, and who could give to literature what it chiefly lacks today, a core of ethical conviction and a view of man in his world *sub specie æternitatis*. It is the appointed time in which to read Dante and Milton, Shakespeare, and Goethe, above all Plato and the great tragedies of Greece". In such passages the editor of the *Saturday Review* shows himself more the humanist than was the editor of *Books*, though he has never stayed to formulate his theory of the writer as a rational and self-respecting being in the manner in which he has formulated his theory of the writer as a creature of the flux.

If Mr. Canby ever and again reveals a pungent common sense, a direct insight, and even a certain humane elevation, together with a capacity for composition firm and shapely, it must be admitted that most of his writing suffers from both his prevailing theory and his too-strenuous practice. If it is true, as he maintains, that journalism "killed" Sherman, it has for the most part kept Mr. Canby on the plane of the superficial in thought and slipshod in word. The journalistic critic at his best cannot undertake editorial and other duties but must bring to focus all of his energies: like Sainte-Beuve,

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who, describing his secluded mode of life, said, "I leave the house only from necessity, to look for books—for fodder, as I say. My whole life is spent reading, then writing, then correcting proofs". There were long, uninterrupted hours, day after day, in which Sainte-Beuve could reflect as well as read and write; he was free of those irrelevant pressures that keep thought in fragments and render composition, whether of thought or words, experimental and premature. Now, Mr. Canby himself complains that ours is an age without meditation, and therefore without steady insight. Ours is the age of outlook, even in our psychology. "The literary plants we grow," he continues, "are brave, bright-colored fellows, fluttering with vivid details and hung with fat fruits of philosophy. Yet now and then one longs for some less sappy, stalky vegetables, for something with *roots,* deep roots that go down and down into the deep earth of long meditation." He could not have better described what we miss in his own brave literary plants.

In a time of intellectual and artistic chaos, when the central need is that of constructive thought resisting the disintegrating forces everywhere at work, the journalistic critic cannot afford to limit himself to the task of intelligent reporting. That will accomplish something, perhaps, and is justified if the critic lacks the power of sending down deep roots. Something may also be accomplished by a weekly review that perforce ignores all but a comparatively few books among the thousands that pour from the presses, although it is doubtful whether a review which is virtually an open forum, making the inexpert reader the judge of the conflicting expert writers, can shape opinion so effectively as a journal that adopts a definite policy. From the choice of such an editorial policy, and from the attempt to formulate standards for the governance of his own criticism, Mr. Canby is effectively withheld by his theory of historical necessity. Loth to interfere in the least with the push of movements, he apparently assumes that movements are the work not of men but of mysterious unhuman forces. He shares very largely the modern respect—shall we say veneration?—for the "forces" that are "vital" in any given age and that demand a virtually unconditional surrender of artists and critics. The river of literature ceases to be a mere analogy or symbol; it becomes a conception nearly as rigid as that of organic evolution. Excellence is the result of a sort of natural selection, rather than artificial or human selection. The mind of the modernist is deterministic to such an extent that, when he has casually ventured to assert himself, he looks back upon his antics with a crestfallen apathy.

As the impressionist critic cannot transcend his impressions, so the historical critic cannot transcend history. Instead of surveying and defining the stream of things from a superior vantage point, he turns out to be in fact swimming with the current—and shooting Niagara.

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LYTTON STRACHEY

by Louis Kronenberger

LYTTON STRACHEY has erudition and irony; and he has style. These three dominating characteristics can be set forth as definitely as Arnold sets forth the requirements for the grand style in poetry or for properly translating Homer. Strachey has written, in ironical words of one syllable, perhaps as shapely biographies as we have in the language; and because most of his subjects were designed by nature for being found out, his irony has not been misunderstood. I think that no one will deny that Mr. Strachey has read very widely and remembered very well—in other words, that he is erudite. But this is not all. In the essay on Cardinal Manning, in the memoir of Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex, here and there in *Books and Characters*, his style rises to impressive heights, to heights it is always worth the trouble to scan.

Erudition is harder to come by now than it was fifty years ago, chiefly because so much that was once accepted as knowledge has been revealed as ignorance. We have fewer learned historians and critics than clever, or even polished, writers. Mr. Strachey (for a short time his position was unique) is something of both. The process of calling Voltaire a monkey, Mme du Deffand a cat, and Florence Nightingale an eagle, turned Mr. Strachey into an owl. His erudition may be measurable, but it is genuine and authoritative. For if it has one predominating quality, it is what we may call its sweepingness. Mr. Strachey does not take us with him every step of the way: he has always first arrived. A book like *Landmarks of French Literature* is not cheerfully academic, like a book by George Saintsbury or Edmund Gosse; it is a guide-book (and we are expected to follow the guide) which is also a work of valuable criticism. For if the book seems to have much in common with the *History of English Literature* of Moody and Lovett, it actually has the manner, and a good deal of the penetration as well, of, let us say, Matthew Arnold. Only an absorbent mind capable of full appreciation could have written in so impressive a fashion of Racine or Pascal; and only a mind that had studied, and come to know, the age of Victoria could have written with such success about the eminent Victorians. It is true that Strachey makes his erudition his means, not his end. It may seem at times disinterested and aloof, but actually it works always as an *arrière-pensée*. For though Mr. Strachey may read for the pleasure of reading, he loves facts for the pleasure of drawing conclusions. And of course that type of mind, whatever its virtues, is odious to the true scholars: it marks Mr. Strachey, for better or worse, as a critic.

It is this wedding of erudition with irony, this arranging facts in a critical design (in Strachey as in all other "interpreters") that gives salt to his writings. The biographies of *Eminent Victorians* are not really biographies at all; they are summaries and siftings.

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Queen Victoria is a summary—of the age to which she gave her name—interrupted by the fascinations of a personality. But the erudition is used as a means toward not only one end—criticism; it is also a means toward another—the awed submission of the reader. Mr. Strachey is very firm, very positive, very uncompromising; he aims at putting down critical rebellion on the part of his audience. To do this he has more than once arranged his facts a little too prettily, or made doubtful statements as though they could not possibly admit of doubt. He intimidates us into accepting as great a line of Racine's which we could heathenishly look upon as conventional; he releases us from the obligation of putting any stock in Arnold's touchstone of "high seriousness" simply by making fun of the phrase. And, faced by so much learning, it is sometimes difficult to object. Edmund Gosse, to be sure, could rise from reading *Queen Victoria* and discover that a young man like Lytton Strachey, though he wrote well and knew much, knew less than himself: Gosse discovered errors. The rest of us must sometimes take the same liberty. For one thing mars Mr. Strachey's triumph: we always begin, but we do not always end, by admiring his learning. We begin with awe; it were better for him if we ended with it. For one can go no higher than awe; and as we gain confidence, as we lose faith, as we dissociate the words from the voice which utters them, the facts from the verdict which depends upon them, we descend from awe a step, perhaps two steps, lower. We admire a technique.

Arranging, withholding, understating, emphasizing; giving, in short, every life or every career the effective structure of a work of art; always appearing to let the facts speak for themselves but always in reality speaking for them, Mr. Strachey, with his resources of knowledge and irony and style, whatever his Queen Victoria or Cardinal Manning or Sir Robert Cecil may in real life have been, produces a fiction which supplants the fact. In every case his "reading" pierces to salient characteristics; in every case his people are simplified while seeming to grow more complex;* in every case, accordingly, they are more memorable than real people. And possibly they can never be anything different to us again. He has doomed Cardinal Manning and Miss Nightingale and Dr. Arnold; and Victoria, once a great personage, he has turned into a petty symbol. From out the store of his learning he has vivified Mme du Deffand and redecorated so passée a figure as Lady Hester Stanhope; and written with equal sureness of Voltaire's dull tragedies and his sparkling months at the court of Frederick the Great. But wherever his learning has lacked a bias, an ironic connotation, it has failed: it was an unhappy and unnatural Strachey who wrote the essay on William Blake.

Mr. Strachey's second outstanding gift—irony—is the most insistent and readily comprehensible thing about him. Seldom concerned with contemporary issues, it appeals to the contemporary mind without having to break down any of its defences. In origin this irony is less didactic than temperamental; it arises, not from reactions to a condition but from a point of view. Mr. Strachey would have been most at home, perhaps, in the France of the eighteenth century, when men and women were classicist, rational and prejudiced. He is a cloister Voltaire, as nimble and cutting in literary warfare as was the patriarch of Ferney in life. He is as destructive of the past as Voltaire was of the present. Voltaire beheaded Marie Antoinette; Strachey beheaded Victoria.

When I say that this irony springs from temperament, from the mental outlook of a French rationalist, or at least of a naturalized French rationalist, I have possibly begun to explain just what this quarrel with

* Queen Elizabeth, for example, is so much simplified while seeming to grow more complex that a single line from Tennyson sums up Strachey's portrayal of her: "This way and that dividing the swift mind".

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the past consists of. This irony is a great weapon in the cause of classicism. (This is true in spite of the fact, which I shall try to prove later, that Mr. Strachey himself has many romantic leanings.) Mr. Strachey went after the scalp of romantic humbug. This, rather than strict truth of whatever sort it might be, was his first concern; and whether or not this was sensed by his imitators and successors, it explains why the whole tendency of modern biography has been, not to revaluate soberly, but to debunk. The romantic trappings, the romantic legends, the romantic virtues were to be razed; if one's contemporaries painted one romantically, the paint was to be scraped off; if one *was* romantic, one was to be judged either ridiculous or pathological.

There the imitators have stopped, but there a man of Mr. Strachey's insight and critical powers could not stop. Once he had tracked romantic humbug to its corner and annihilated it, a personage or a period might begin to appear in its true light, and more significant problems begin to assert themselves. Victoria's crown slipped off, leaving Victoria dowdy; her letter-box was opened, leaving her inarticulate, scatter-brained. Irony needed no emphasizing there: the facts could speak for themselves. But with Prince Albert, or Dr. Arnold of Rugby, or especially with Manning, whose biretta and surplice slipped off easily, there was a mind as well as a body to strip; and Strachey prepared to strip the mind.

Queen Victoria, in the last analysis, is a picture of Victorianism—the good side and the bad; *Eminent Victorians,* where the irony begins with the title itself, is an indictment of it. It strikes at a revival of faith and a perpetuation of bigotry; it strikes at the seed of modern education in England; at the power which hero-worship gives to incompetent heroes. The book is in part an angry book, where *Queen Victoria* is an amusingly malicious one; and because it is angry, the irony comes close to being disqualified. For it ceases to be sceptical and becomes personal. When Swift, galled and bitter, sat down and wrote his *Modest Proposal,* he imbedded his acrimony in a mound of literalness, and gave us one of the most powerful ironic documents in our literature. When Strachey began writing the first essay, he plunged into his subject with the not altogether Olympian desire of showing Manning up. The paper is perhaps his most and his least successful piece of work. Strachey's fury, his personal absorption in his subject, make it devastating; but he has ceased here and there to be a French rationalist, he has become an Alexander Pope. (Let us merely set side by side, in matters of this description, the two names Pope and Swift.)

We who lack Strachey's background in dealing with his subjects are at something of a disadvantage in criticizing the validity of his results. But we also possess an advantage; we are forced to judge Strachey not as a historian but as an artist. And in an essay like that on Florence Nightingale, the artist is highly effective. This essay is much closer to Strachey at his happiest. Parts of the woman are petty and incongruous enough to excite merely contemptuous laughter; and Strachey, though he can never quite offer pity, at least withholds his most damaging tools. For Florence, after all, is not important enough; she is too easily, too palpably, travestied. "The Lady with the Lamp" is an eminent Victorian in wholly another sense than Manning. It is with Miss Nightingale only a domineering, grotesquely energetic woman with altogether incommensurate powers that must be attacked; with Manning there had to be exposed the coalition of pretentious, assumptive, designing forces.

Mr. Strachey's shorter essays—such as the sketches in *Books and Characters*—are treated rather in the ironical manner than as subjects for sustained irony. They will probably outlast everything else he has written; their slender perfection will engage the notice of every future anthologist. "Lady Hester Stan-

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hope", "Mr. Creevey", "Voltaire and Frederick the Great", "Madame du Deffand", possess a charm that is absent from Strachey's longer flights, for in them he has been free to demonstrate his temperament instead of his prejudices. They are drawn with a fond and nostalgic hand, they are almost tributes of friendship—of that sophisticated friendship which makes up in understanding what it lacks of loyalty. Here subject and author meet on a common footing, and wit, rhetoric, prejudice, cultivated personality commingle; here Strachey steps into his place as a man of the world of books.

That Mr. Strachey's learning is an orderly rather than voluminous learning, or his irony an explicit rather than elusive irony (which I do not think will be doubted) is due in great measure to his style. This style first impresses us by the quality of its *discipline*. It seems to lean toward clarity, compression, pointedness—the characteristics both Strachey and ourselves conceive of, and admire, as Gallic. But it bears re-examination both for its merits and its revelations. Particularly in the critical portions of his work, it finally emerges as too clear, too compressed, too pointed. Truth gets sacrificed to a formula or a thesis. I have often thought that Strachey could write incomparable criticism of imaginary writers whose work exhibited what he wanted it to exhibit rather than what it does. (Without knowing it, he treats real people as a novelist does his characters.) For sometimes his criticism goes so little by the facts that it ends as nothing much more nor less than a wish-fulfilment. If you read one of his worst productions, the Leslie Stephen lecture on Pope, you will find clarity, compression and point elevating nonsense into the appearance of criticism; you will almost fail to observe Mr. Strachey's amazing suppressions in order to make quarter-truths look like whole ones; you will almost be persuaded into believing that the heroic couplet —nothing more nor less—can constitute, as Mr. Strachey says it does, a "criticism of life".

The style is nowhere more the man than in Strachey; in fact, it is an astonishing psychological index to him. For when we see truth go flying in the paper on Pope, in certain of the details concerning Racine or Sir Thomas Browne, were it not for an inherent revelation of the style we might be led to consider Strachey, in the last analysis, unscrupulous. But from the style one gathers, at long last, that Strachey is not unscrupulous, but romantic.

For surely it is romantic to love one's effects of style too well, to love too well one's prejudices, one's tradition, one's deadly knowledge of words; surely it is romantic to deal too imaginatively with a set of facts, to gaze ever past the object to what it is *supposed* to mean; surely it was romantic to come, as I believe Strachey came, perilously close to falling in love, at times, with Queen Victoria. I do not know if it is romantic to write more effectively, more effusively, more figuratively than the occasion warrants, but it is not classicist to do this; it is not what Swift or Voltaire would have done.

To hear the words of Phèdre spoken by the mouth of Bernhardt, to watch, in the culminating horror of crime and of remorse, of jealousy, of rage, of desire and of despair, all the dark forces of destiny crowd down upon that great spirit, when the heavens and earth reject her, and Hell opens, and the terrific urn of Minos thunders and crashes to the ground—that indeed is to come close to immortality, to plunge shuddering through infinite abysses, and to look, if only for a moment, upon eternal light.

I submit that this—to give only one example—exceeds necessity; it is eloquent and "romantic". And those tempting parallelisms, those sweeping absolutes of statement, those vigorous but often gratuitous metaphors that fill Strachey's pages, frequently exceed necessity. They are not classic and they are not always accurate; they are, in fact, prompted by a romantic urge to idealize, to bring to pass a little more than exists—they involve the wish-fulfilment of which I have already

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spoken. These stylistic excesses produce critical inaccuracies. Nor am I confusing, to the best of my knowledge, classicism with neoclassicism in judging these things romantic: the classic writer does not lack imaginativeness, vigor, full-bodied expression; but he does not write inappropriately, he does not let temptation sweep him off his feet; he will never exceed necessity.

Having attempted to show so much, I have not meant by so doing to condemn this style in itself. In Strachey the critic it seems to me frequently out of place and a blemish; in the biographer there is much more to be said for it. For myself, however, I cannot, thinking not only of styles like Swift's or Addison's or Hume's, but even of Pater's or Gibbon's, call Strachey, as he is often called, a great stylist. I would rather call him, it seems to me far more accurate to call him, a great rhetorician. I am not trying to quibble; but the characteristics, the merits, of a great rhetorician differ from those of a great stylist. Our rhetorician falls back more often and more heavily than our stylist on devices and artifices; he draws on culture or cunning rather than on a natural reservoir of expression; he is given to what the French call *simplesse* as against what they call *simplicité*; he is usually elegant; he is primarily concerned with expression as a thing in itself rather than with expression in close relationship to the thing expressed; and he is often tempted to be, he often *is*, eloquent. I find these things, varying in degree, varying in duration, in Mr. Strachey's prose.

But the great rhetorician, though inferior to the great stylist, is perhaps just as rare; and his prose—the more so because it is less spontaneously achieved—may be an exemplary prose. It may even, if fundamentally sound, wear unusually well; though it fails, in the long run, of illusion, its magic and finesse explain themselves, we see through it. We can only see *into* the finest natural prose. A great rhetorician will reveal a manner, or mannerisms, where a great stylist reflects an irreducible idiom. Strachey's use of understatement, for example, appears at length as mannerism: Swift's does not. To make use once more of the *Modest Proposal*, see how there a true classicist has an organic conception of understatement, see how understatement particularizes a whole piece of writing, becomes the mobilizing idiom of a whole idea, so that at no separate point it calls attention to itself or becomes an artifice to strengthen a general effect; it *is* the general effect. Understatement in Strachey, like his occasional laconicism, his massed climaxes, his sudden partings of a curtain, is really rhetorical ornament. In Voltaire or Swift there is no ornament: only a uniform texture.

There are great stylists whose prose is distinguished by a career of its own apart from the contents; but this is far more often true of rhetoricians. In Strachey one often feels that style and content are not organically united, are dissoluble if not actually disparate. There is nothing of the Elizabethan spirit about *Elizabeth and Essex*: there is a deliberate avoidance—sufficiently justified, I admit, by the point of view—of the Victorian spirit in *Queen Victoria*. On the other hand, the essays on Voltaire and Mme du Deffand are spiritually related to their subjects: they are mirrors, not chopping-blocks or microscopes, and that is one reason why I think they will outlast everything else Mr. Strachey has written. *Their* texture is uniform, and their merit the great one of providing a whole larger than the sum of its parts. This is not always true elsewhere; the description of the assembling in Rome of the Church Council, the portrait of King Philip against a background of the Escurial have the adorned prose of set pieces. They are not at all vulgarly adorned, and call for high admiration, but they are purple patches. Infinitely better, say, than Macaulay's account of the trial of Warren Hastings; but not greatly different.

A classicist manqué? Or just as conceivably, a romantic manqué? No, Strachey is not to be cleft in two, and one half of him

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sacrificed to the claims of the other half. It is true, perhaps, that had Strachey been born in the France of Voltaire he would have been genuinely classicist. But it is also conceivable that had he been born in the England of Byron he would have been genuinely romantic. For we must remember that while the age in which a poet lives means much, the race from which he springs means more. Being English, Strachey's blood cannot help accepting its heritage of a great romantic literature; his response to Shakespeare or Keats or Sir Thomas Browne is intuitively sympathetic, even in defiance of his temperament. By temperament and taste, even by cultivation, he may run counter to this response, but like a Catholic turned atheist, he is only an atheistic Catholic to the end.

Thus, in spite of prejudices and preferences, Strachey is essentially an eclectic: as much drawn to Browne and Beddoes as to Racine and Stendhal. And being an eclectic, in the final sense he sums up no definite point of view; his work establishes no ultimate literary principles. The romantic elements, not only of his style but of his taste, tear down much that his classicism builds up; and in the end a great deal cancels out. This cancellation is to be deplored, not so much as a categorical objection to eclecticism, as because, in Strachey's case, the two sides of his nature are unequal. It is the classical which is the positive side, which represents the vital idiom of the man, which has a unique and memorable bouquet, a true verve, a permanent effectiveness. It is this side of his nature which has achieved what no one else could have achieved. It is the romantic side which contains most of his faults, with which we could dispense without losing anything really individual or significant; and for that reason it is the romantic instinct which has done damage. Victoria would have been even better exposed had not Strachey come so perilously close to falling in love with her; Manning would have been far better indicted had not Strachey come so perilously close to hating him; understatement would have seemed less rhetorical had not hyperbole followed so often at its heels. For with the romantic impulse, the subjective entered in—despite all the impersonality of its surfaces, Mr. Strachey's work really lacks a high disinterestedness; even its irony is partly the result of one side of a dual nature looking at the other and achieving the cautious equipoise of *nil admirari*.

But if this dual nature is to be lamented from the strict standpoint of criticism, it is to be cherished for the pleasure it provides. It explains why one so often termed a classicist impregnates his pages with a sense of himself as pervasive as any "personal" essayist's. He is always, or so it seems to me, in the picture. And why not? For rhetoric is not self-effacing; irony born of trying to give equilibrium to a dual nature is not impersonal; learning mastered to prove a point does not make one humble. But this personality which slowly reveals itself through the chinks and cracks of an impassive surface, is a rare and influential one. It is because this influence, this distinction, is in no danger of being neglected or destroyed that, while emphasizing Mr. Strachey's limitations, I have so often been able to take his virtues for granted.

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SUNFLOWERS

by Robert P. Tristram Coffin

The dials of these honeyed clocks
  Fringed with leaves of sun
Turn obedient to the wheels
  That make the daystar run.

These are the eyes that stare at one
  Unblinking as the ox,
With the steady disregard
  Of faces of old clocks.

They see and know, but what it is
  They know and see is not
To be taken in that snare
  We men call a thought.

It is too bright to be enclosed
  In midnight made of bone,
It is too living in its wings
  To perch and brood alone.

It is as sharp as two-edged swords,
  It turns the edge of thunder;
It travels farther into space
  Than arrows of our wonder.

It is a thing whose name is Sweet;
  In their honeycomb
Wild bees dream of it but may
  Not bring its essence home.

In the high hours of the sun
  These eyes are wide with scorn
Looking through us things of bone
  That perish, being born.

But when they turn their level gaze
  Where the low sun lies,
There is pity for us men
  In these hot, sad eyes.

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THE BOSWELL OF NEW YORK

by Harry Salpeter

DURING the past few years I have reviewed and interviewed approximately one hundred authors: men and women, Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Austrians, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, atheists and agnostics; Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals, Republicans, Democrats and Socialists; humanists and anti-humanists; poets, novelists, playwrights, biographers, heavy intellectuals and charlotte-russe intellectuals, men and women who didn't have much to say and said it well, and men and women who had so much to say that they didn't know how to say it; men and women who wrote badly and were popular and men and women who wrote well and were not popular; men and women who had found fortune and were searching for the accolade of even contemporary fame, and others who had won that kind of fame and pretended to fear and distrust it, and men and women whose reward was greater in the press than it was in their royalty statements. Among this hundred, I have found men and women whose personalities were as exciting as the first view of a new continent and others as dull as the books they write. And yet, take any hundred members in any one profession and I challenge them to be as interesting as this hundred authors. It is not for nothing that the world at large is interested in looking at, reading about or hearing an author, with or without a message. It is simply unfortunate that the finer the author the less he cares to be exhibited and fussed over, and that it is the cheaper type of author who takes up the space, the attention and the publicity that the better author disdains.

I have been called the Boswell of New York. Without hastening to claim that (socially) dubious distinction, I may point out that whereas Boswell ploughed a narrow plot of ground and ploughed deeply, I have ploughed a rather large territory rapidly and perhaps superficially. With me the rule has to be an author a week, whereas Boswell found in one author the work of a lifetime, although there were a couple of other fellows in his life. But whether he was less than equal to most of them, he certainly was more than interviewer. Except to the extent that the interviewer reveals as much of himself as of his subject, as any writer reveals himself in anything he writes, Boswell, at least, was clear of the imputation which attaches to such time-limited interviewers as myself; that is, that he may be easily deceived by any subject who wishes to present himself, for an hour, in a false light, to the confusion of the interviewer and the deception of that part of the public which reads his report. In the case of so bland an egocentric as that contemporary portraitist, Frank Harris, such attempts would not matter, for the Harrises are so wrapped up in themselves that candor and deception in their subjects become equally negligible.

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The workaday interviewer must guard against any possibility of being fooled, but not by assuming that an attempt will be made to do so. A person may be ready to make great efforts to misrepresent the values, or lack of values, behind a new stock issue, but no man who is big enough to be interviewed has so little vanity about himself that he will make an effort to seem to be much different than he really is. In the give and take of an intelligent conversation, it is difficult for either participant to maintain, of set purpose, a position cramping to his natural tendency. The chief purpose of a good interviewer is to set forth a consistent personality; in the case of an author, the reading of a representative work of his is an excellent and convenient preparation for the interview, and the interviewer who can see the author as a consistent extension of the work and the work as a consistent expression of the author —without making too ridiculous a fetish of consistency (or striving too hard to discover points of inconsistency)—will have a good interview and the most excellent assurance against deception. Usually, an interview rises or falls to the level of the interviewer's capacity for "getting at" a personality in the man or woman facing him. At the risk of appearing vain, I must, however, make the declaration that I have met a few authors by whom I have been obliged to sink my questions to a lower level than I had planned.

As subjects for interview, I prefer to deal with men authors. The male department of literature has exhibited to me a wider range of personality, extending from gentlemen as cultivated as Willard Huntington Wright—who is also the detective-story writer, S. S. Van Dine—and Thomas Beer; as aflame with the sense of life as Thomas Wolfe, as sensitive as Edwin Arlington Robinson, down to Trader Horn, who was always pulling down his socks and pulling up his underwear to show his leg wounds to mixed company. And then there was E. W. Howe, the Kansas cracker-box philosopher, who would emphasize a conclusion or point an anecdote with a kind of crackling laugh and a gentle kick in the interviewer's thigh. And then one might descend to Jim Tully, a hard-boiled professional sentimentalist who could hardly keep the edge of boastfulness from his manner, as much as to say: "Look at me, boys, I was a tramp yesterday; now my income is fifty thousand a year".

For the first minute of my interview with Theodore Dreiser he struck me as a bad-mannered, glowering Titan, but he gradually thawed out and during the interview folded and unfolded a handkerchief, a characteristic gesture of his by which some of his nervous energy seems to be absorbed. He is decidedly one of our heaviest intellectuals. Sinclair Lewis, on the other hand, had no opinions that day, but I suspect that he made it a point to have no opinions that day. He gave me, instead, a number of funny stories, all but one of which I have forgotten, and that one cannot be quoted. However, he mixes an excellent highball; and he did have the idea that his best novel was not *Main Street* but *Arrowsmith*. Although called "Red" Lewis, he does seem a little bit sensitive to criticism. He was most resentful of the charge that he had refused a Pulitzer prize for the sake of publicity.

Richard Halliburton has been so consistent in the performance of his rôle of a naïve, romantic youth on glamorous adventure bound that I am wondering whether it is really possible to be consistent in a false attitude, or whether that attitude seems false only because it would be false to most of us if we attempted to assume it. Or is it possible to be romantic and have a ravenous hunger for all kinds of publicity? Is it possible to be seeking the strange places of the earth because they are strange and glamorous or because you have the assurance of a minimum of thirty thousand dollars for ten articles from the *Ladies' Home Journal*? Is it possible to be naïve and open-hearted and stand before the window of a Brentano store in

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which a stock of your latest book is on display and be seen reading, with absorbed fascination, a copy of that same book? Each human being is so mysterious a tangle that to these self-put questions I can only answer: I don't know.

Glenway Wescott was very explicit in the assertion that he could take it or leave it alone—"it" being wealth, luxury, fortune, success—but that otherwise he required nothing short of immortality. He was a Wisconsin farm boy who deliberately acquired an English accent. Nevertheless he has integrity, if not genius. He has the pride of the man who feels his artistic self-sufficiency a bit too much perhaps. He is regarded as a poseur, but in defence of him you can say, as you cannot say of some others: Judge him by what he has done.

One of the most enjoyable interviews I ever had was that with Louis Bromfield, the young man who knows women. I enjoyed it because he told me such funny stories that he practically disabled me for the rest of the hour of the interview. He sparkles and crackles like electricity. He is gay and vital and hopeful, a titanic worker. Thornton Wilder was frankly delighted to be interviewed, almost bubbling over at the novelty of the experience. It was with some difficulty that his publishers persuaded him to cut short our talk so that he might meet the dozens of admirers who were drinking tea and other things in an adjoining room. Him I found more ready to talk about the problem of writing prose. He was then—and I believe he is now—above the desire for publicity and he is now certainly above the need. He distrusts success, regarding it as a mark of inferiority in craftsmanship; for, he said, that which is widely read and acclaimed probably encloses a sentimental appeal even if the author is not aware of it. My most unhappy experience was with Mr. Wilder's best-known admirer, Gene Tunney, who threatened to slam the door in my face if I came up to his training quarters to ask him about anything but boxing. In view of the fact that my ignorance about boxing was comparable to his ignorance about literature I refrained from paying Mr. Gene Tunney the unnecessary call.

There are authors possessing so rich a personality-content that one leaves them regretfully, with the hope and desire to see them again. They are the people whose next works you are eager to look into, or whose old works you are ready to re-read. I found Robert Frost to be such a man, genuine, overflowing with kindness, full of wisdom self-acquired. I had something of the same feeling for Thomas Wolfe, tall, ungainly, handsome, avid for new perception, ready to give understanding, wanting little but to put his visions onto paper. William Carlos Williams, physician and poet, I found to be as true a man; he labors at his profession in a little community and sets apart what few hours are vouchsafed him from work and family for the recording of those images and thoughts which distinguish him in his circle.

John Dos Passos was full of a quiet ardor. His desire has something in it of the Communist revolution and of Henry David Thoreau. He wishes to be unshackled by wealth, or objects, to live vividly, always travelling, never staying long enough in one place to allow his perception of it to become stale. Ring Lardner said: "Where do they get that stuff about me being a satirist? I ain't no satirist. I just listen". He wasn't angry, he wasn't excited, he wasn't interested. He had too many high-priced magazine fish to fry to worry about his place in the pantheon of American literature. And H. L. Mencken expressed just about as much concern over the alleged waning of his "influence", denying that he had ever desired it, or possessed it, and conveying his condolences to anybody in American life who was being regarded as an influence in matters of the intellect. That American author who looks most like a poet is a social philosopher who bears the name of Lewis Mumford, and that American poet who looks most like

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Adolphe Menjou—and should be made to double for him—is Joseph Auslander, the author of *Letters to Women*, which he has read out loud with much applause.

More and more, it seems to me, women are speaking for themselves, in plays, novels and poetry, so that it would be possible for those who want to learn about women to do without the books men write about them. . . . Take Ellen Glasgow, for example, a Southern gentlewoman, who brings to American fiction the manners of a lady and the sympathies of a woman. One of the finest, and one of the most neglected poets in America is Lola Ridge who wrote *The Ghetto* and *Firehead*. I know of no author who is so consecrated to poetry as she. She has the quality that so highly distinguished the late Elinor Wylie. A superbly self-possessed woman, I remember her sitting straight-backed, answering with precision and clarity, in so many words and no more. There was not in her attitude that subtle courting of publicity, by which authors, in common with the rest of mankind, subtly or crudely betray their desire.

Ruth Suckow has something of the same quality, a perfect indifference to what people will say. She has the not entirely ridiculous idea that if she goes on writing the best novels she knows how, enough people will read them to enable her to go on writing better and better novels. And in the same way Evelyn Scott, after more than ten years of absolute neglect, came through when her novel of the Civil War, *The Wave*, was published. One can better realize what a distance women writers in America have travelled when one remembers that George Eliot and George Sand had to use men's names in order not to shock anyone, and that Fanny Burney submitted her first novel anonymously for fear it might not be published otherwise. The only woman who has published novels in this generation under a man's name is Henry Handel Richardson, an Englishwoman whose reason for using a male name was that she wished to be judged by the most severe standard. But, with Englishwomen like Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf writing prose today, I do not see what fear any woman can have that she will be judged too leniently.

Rebecca West is the most brilliant Englishwoman I have ever interviewed but, whether the fault be mine or not, she is much more brilliant in what she writes that in what she said the day on which I saw her. Among American women, the late Frances Newman was perhaps the most direct and courageous. There was a little more vinegar in her opinions of fellow-writers than there was need of. Her first question to me was "Have you pencil and paper?"—as much as to say, "Don't let anything I say go unrecorded". She may have been foolhardy in expressing, without reservation, her contempt for most of her contemporaries. But what she said she stood by. She spoke forthrightly, without saying, as so many celebrities will, "But don't say I said so". As for other literary ladies I have interviewed, Elizabeth Madox Roberts was almost hypersensitively diffident and reticent, Julia Peterkin—whose *Scarlet Sister Mary* won the Pulitzer prize last year—most kindly and motherly-seeming; Sarah Gertrude Millin, who came for a visit from Johannesburg, South Africa, seemed like a little girl lost in a big city, and Sylvia Townsend Warner talked with the charm with which she writes. But the most beautiful woman novelist I have ever met, or ever can hope to meet, was the young English girl who wrote *Dusty Answer*, Rosamond Lehmann. I cannot now remember what it was we talked about.

During the year many Europeans come to America for one or another purpose and I have interviewed most of them. "See Naples and die" is one of Europe's come-on phrases for American tourists. "See America and lecture" seems to be the rule which visiting Europeans follow. To be an author is celebrity enough, but to be a European author is to many the very height of celebrity.

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I must confess a prejudice against French novelists who pretend to have come in order to convey to Americans the full truth of the thing that is called love. They talk about love as a science or an art and it sounds fearfully impressive. But it seems that the Americans who learned about love from France did not learn about it at the feet of visiting masculine lecturers. At least one of these novelists has come not to talk about love, but to find out why American women are that way. Which is a most reasonable reason for coming to America. But the worst part of that was that he was going to talk and write about them. . . . The Abbé Dimnet, who wrote *The Art of Thinking*, simply sought to squeeze into fifteen minutes an hour's equivalent of publicity. Perhaps I shall see the abbé some time when he is not in such a frightful hurry. André Maurois, who knows more about English life and literature and politics than most Americans, told me with precision why he wrote about Shelley and Disraeli and Byron and why he was going to write about Meredith. There was no nonsense about Maurois. . . . Paul Morand, however, has been in the diplomatic service of France; he was nothing if not diplomatic, and I distrust diplomacy and diplomats. . . . Count Keyserling I remember chiefly for the incomprehensible rapidity of his speech, his mandarin beard and the gleam of his gold teeth. . . . Jakob Wassermann, the Austrian who wrote *The World's Illusion*, was probably the most earnest and most sincere foreign celebrity I have ever met. He seemed to be wrapped up in memories of pain and in visions. He is the kind of man who comes neither to lecture nor to teach and who will sit in nobody's show window nor be a literary lion at any rich woman's tea. . . . Lord Dunsany, the Irish playwright, was so much alive to his opportunities that he tried to sell me the American rights to an article which he had already sold to an English paper.

Emil Ludwig was so busy capitalizing his American vogue that he couldn't tell me what he thought of Bernard Shaw because he planned to sell his opinions in writing. . . . John Masefield, the new laureate of England, who has written some of the finest narrative verse, was quite close-mouthed and a bit tired of the fact that all most people knew of him was that he was once a porter in Luke O'Connor's saloon in Greenwich Village. . . . E. Phillips Oppenheim looked like Tweedledee with suspenders on. Edgar Wallace is built pretty much on Oppenheim's style. . . . Richard Hughes, the author of the charming novel *The Innocent Voyage*, was humorous in a quiet way, frail of body, kind of disposition, and sported a beard which could not belie the youthfulness of his pink cheeks. J. C. Squire was so averse to wasting words in conversation that one wondered if he had not Ludwig's motive. W. Somerset Maugham explained the origins of some of his stories and told of the pull which the theatre exercised on him, and of his allegiances in modern art, and of how residence in the South Seas periodically refreshed his sources for fiction and drama.

The only resident of that part of the world I ever met was a resident of Papeete, Tahiti, who comes to the United States once in five years. He is an American, James Norman Hall, who was brought up and educated in the Middle West and who has written some splendid, though little known books of travel. He lives with his family in Tahiti in order to escape the nerve-racking hurry and bustle of American life. Another man of the same type is Llewelyn Powys the seventeenth-century Englishman who sometimes strays into a twentieth-century New York, but who spends most of his time in a lonely cottage on a cliff overlooking the English channel. There he turns back the clock and dreams himself into the time of Montaigne and Shakespeare. Not everyone writes in order to make a fortune, and the three Powys brothers—John Cowper, Llewelyn and Theodore—are wise enough not to expect fortune beyond their capacities for its use.

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It was Robert Nichols, the English poet and playwright, the co-author of *Wings Over Europe*, who gave the most magnificent exhibition of self-abandon to which I have ever been treated. Fifteen minutes after the interview had begun, this intense and long-legged Englishman was striding up and down reciting the blank-verse lines of his next play, *Don Juan*. In his powerful stride, he threw back his head, clenched his fists and declaimed the lines of which he was most proud. It was the most genuine and most boyish outburst I have ever heard even from a poet.

I have met and interviewed and written about other authors, and from those interviews and from what I have read of their books I believe I am justified in this conclusion: That the essential author is not to be discovered in an hour's interview (except with the help of previous knowledge of him as contained in his works, and with that of the interviewer's intuition), or in social conversation at a tea, or at the end of a lecture, but in the book he has written—his best book, of course. It is in a man's book, as a rule, that you get close to the essential fire of the man, to what he has to say, to his justification for writing, to the real fellow who sits before his desk. The people who are interested in the typical author are interested in him because he's the temporary thing, the fashion. The more they're interested in the clothes he wears or the chit-chat he communicates the less they care about the man he really is—and the man he really is is to be discovered in the pages of the books he has written; for the reason that the book is a man's condensed expression, the inescapable self, the true portrait for which he could not have been posed. But the man who wrote the book may appear, at the time you see him, casual and commonplace—as many have; but to see only the casualness and the commonplaceness of him is to misjudge him. If a man is the sum of his best moments, the man's in the book; and, the book perceived, the physical presence of the man takes on a meaning it could not have had before.

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WOMEN POETS

by Virginia Moore

If Plato was right when he wrote in the *Republic* that poet-philosophers should rule the State because they represent the highest development of the human mind, if Archibald MacLeish is right when he says that the conflict between a soul-unified and a machine-dismembered universe will probably be solved by a poet, is woman of a distinctly lower order than man because there has never been a woman philosopher, in the strict sense, or because, while there have been women poets, not one has ranked with Homer, or Lucretius, or Virgil, or Dante, or the author of *The Song of Roland*, or Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Milton, or William Blake, those long-reverberating voices? The only possible exception is Sappho, whose "nine books" were destroyed in the Alexandrian fire of 300 B.C., along with the rest of Ptolemy Soter's enormous library, and whose stature as a poet must be guessed at from fragments quoted by later writers, from one complete poem, the "Hymn to Aphrodite", copied by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in 25 B.C., from "Peer of the Gods", and from those mutilated manuscripts found in an Egyptian ash can and reasonably attributed to "violet-weaving" Sappho. If she was indeed, in poetic power and scope, as some have conjectured, a descendant of Homer and a true antecedent of the William Blake who wrote *The Prophetic Books*, we must say that, among women, the chronologically first is imaginatively first, and put up with her successors. Those poets called great by a consensus of the world's best critical opinion have possessed dramatic, philosophic and epic talents.

There have been comparatively few women poets. The *Oxford Book of English Verse*, a balanced and just anthology, gives space to twenty-four women as opposed to two hundred and forty-four men, and too many of the twenty-four are represented by one forgettable lyric. Women seem highly deficient in the distinguishing talents of the great poets: in other words they are not dramatic, nor philosophic, nor epic. They do not look very far back nor very far forward in time; they are more or less indifferent toward "real existence", an eager desire for the knowledge of which Plato postulated as the first requirement of the true philosophic disposition; they seem unable to synthesize many confusing facts into one divinely simple fact; their eyes stab upward and downward, shallowly; they neglect the cosmos.

Though women must be denied membership in that band of poets who perceive like gods, that mighty and select affiliation, there remain ten or twelve women lyricists who are great in all but the first sense: besides Sappho, Saint Theresa, Emily Brontë, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, Charlotte Mew, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie, Léonie Adams. A third and less certain group includes Alice Meynell, Amy Lowell, Anna Wickham,

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Louise Bogan, Lola Ridge, and "H. D.". In a special category is Nathalia Crane, the little girl who wrote:

> Great is the rose
> Infected by the tomb,
> Yet burgeoning
> Indifferent to death.
>
> Wherein the dawn
> Did stumble to fulfill
> The rose has told
> In one simplicity.
>
> That never life
> Relinquishes a bloom
> But to bestow
> An ancient confidence.
>
> Great is the rose
> That challenges the crypt
> And quotes millenniums
> Against the grave.

Virginia Woolf says, "It is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple. . . ." Yes, pure and simple. A man or woman is first an individual. But womanliness cannot be incidental to a woman, individually or racially, physically or psychically. And her destiny does not consist in being other than she is. She must develop along her own lines if she is to develop at all.

Whatever men are, women are not that, if only because thousands of years of child-bearing, child-rearing, home-building, housekeeping, and husband-comforting produce a different cast of mind, a tenderer individual, than thousands of years of fighting, hunting, tilling, wife-protecting, adventuring, inventing and organizing. Emily Dickinson speaks for all women when she says:

> Nor had I time to love; but since
> Some industry must be,
> The little toil of love I thought
> Was large enough for me.

A woman's nervous system is perilously hung together. Her life is more emotional than intellectual, more spontaneous than scientific. Her thoughts are intimate, fierce, narrow and personal to the point of selfishness, always turning inward, yet loving, tending toward ecstasy—the lyrical attitude. Occasionally a woman has tried to write a narrative poem, or an ode, or a dramatic monologue but, until recently, with little success. Elizabeth Browning's *Aurora Leigh* is tiresome and sentimental; Christina Rossetti's *In the Round Tower at Jhansi*, though theatrical in the good sense, remains decidedly inferior to her best short or long lyrics; *From House to Home* and *Goblin Market* and *The Convent Threshold*, in spite of their length, are several short lyrics pieced together or one short lyric long drawn out. Since 1900 there has been more cerebration in the poetry of women, traceable in part to social, educational and political emancipations. In contrast to Adelaide Crapsey, that very slight but pure poet, and Anna Wickham with her brief domestic insights, and Edna St. Vincent Millay of the deep lyrical impulse, Amy Lowell tells a semi-philosophical story in "Patterns", Elinor Wylie achieves just before her death the fine impersonal tone of "This Corruptible" and "Hymn to Earth", Léonie Adams approaches Donne in masterful and "masculine" metaphysics, and Lola Ridge in *Firehead* attempts that greatest of composite human scenes, the Crucifixion. Can it be that some day a woman will write an epic?

I think it inevitable that some day a woman will write an epic comparable in scope and power and brilliance to the *Iliad* or the *Æneid* or *The Song of Roland* or *The Four Zoas*. But that epic will be like none already written because, however much they converge in customs, morals, and education, women are forever different from men in mind, heart, and racial experience. All that women have suffered since Eve will be in that epic, the painful loving, the parting in exceeding pain, the wish to be an invidual instead of some man's pastime and shadow, the compensation of creating in one's body, the torture of chains and the torture

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of breaking chains, the nervousness of raw sensibilities, the deadly boredom of household tasks and their imaginative redemption, the heavy pleasure of responsibilities, the need to be free, the need to possess and be possessed. It will show woman as she is, gigantic against the sky, her feet upon heroic earth and her head banded by constellations. The past, the present and the future, the kingdom, the glory and the power, as in every epic, will be in that epic. With a difference. God will be exhibiting His most feminine quality, which is out-going love, and re-proving by events that worst feminine vice, in-drawing jealousy. The little will be seen large, in its true relations; the large will sometimes be seen small, because unspiritual, for only the spiritual has dimensions. Included and transcended in that epic will be the lesser lyrical voices of women who have sung in metre since long before Sappho practised and taught the strophe.

Sappho herself will be in that epic not as a character but as a spirit, a subtle influence. She sprang from a noble Aeolian family in Eresus on Lesbos, being born about 635 B.C., and was taken as a child to Mitylene. It is probable, from vague references in Herodotus, that her father was a rich wine merchant. Alcaeus was her contemporary townsman and, judging from a fragment in which she rebukes him for mentioning shame, her lover. To her all "lovely" things were "pure and holy". As to events it is difficult to separate fact from myth. According to Suidas her husband was Cercolas, a man of local importance, and her one child Cleis, or Cleia, named for Sappho's mother. The story of Sappho's fatal leap from a cliff because her love for Phäon was unrequited is doubtless the baseless fabrication of later writers; at least there were no allusions to it until long after Sappho's natural death at well over sixty. Even the thing we call "Sapphic love" may never have touched Sappho. She established what today would be called a "girls' school" and there were bound to have been friendships, just as there were poems, which tradition could, if it wanted, misinterpret. After all, Sappho lived in the "dark backward and abysm of time". Buddha had not yet benefited a third of mankind. Confucius had not yet taught that "The moral life is to be able to follow what the heart desires without transgressing what is right". Rome was a settlement of mud huts on the banks of the strange Tiber. Christ's Sermon on the Mount was to be unuttered until six more centuries had passed. Only Homer and Hesiod and the Hebraic David could be used as models; no other great poet—unless the author of the Book of Job and the prophet Isaiah were poets—had breathed mortal air and sung immortal songs. Yet what fire! What chastity of expression! What simplicity and luminosity! "But the heart of the doves became cold and they dropt beside them their wings." "The moon is set and the Pleiades gone, and it is midnight, and time is going fast, and alone I lie." "For nourishing a contented spirit I clearly know that the blessed gods are present." "To die is an evil. So have decided the gods. Else they would die, being good." "But I have loved delicacy . . ." Even a literal prose translation cannot kill the life in her words. But it is love which startles her finest poetry. "Love, fatal creature . . ." "Now love the limb-loosener sweeps me away . . ." "Love much whiter than an egg . . ." "Some say an army of horsemen is the fairest thing on this sluggish black earth . . . but I say it is the one you love . . ." Erinna was to surpass her in the making of hexameters, but the arrangements which we call "Sapphics" were a clear cry on the lyre of Sappho; later imitators have dulled the sound. The Egyptian manuscripts put a beating heart into the cold statue of this time-lost woman, for they are personal poems, one lamenting her brother Charaxus's trip to Egypt to ransom the courtesan Rhodopis, one telling Atthis not to mind gossip so long as she knows it unfounded; they reveal the woman and confirm the poet.

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They confirm the poetic Muse as a woman. For although two thousand years elapsed before a worthy successor to Sappho was raised up, and she was a poet in deed and feeling more than in word, in the interim women loved, suffered, watched nature, groped toward God, saw divine resemblances (which are metaphor), formed songs in the mind. From her fortieth year Saint Theresa of Old Castile saw visions. The life of her body was barren and renunciatory; she wore a peculiarly painful haircloth. The life of her imagination was varied and rich beyond average comprehension. Are not all poets pierced in the side by light? A poet is a state of mind. Usually that state of mind flows over into the written word. Saint Theresa had the state of mind. When she spoke or wrote that state of mind was shiningly communicated. But usually it remained just a state of mind, or triumphed in a burning act. In any case this woman, out of whose tomb a violet odor and a fragrance of oil were said to distil, by her life and her death and her written words showed the world how poetry and rhapsodic religion converge. Indeed one of her works showed it so gloriously that she was, because of it, almost caught in the toils of the Inquisition.

Of a nature as austere and ecstatic as Saint Theresa's, as unorthodox in its wildness, was a little girl born in the gaunt hills of Yorkshire, Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights*, sardonic novel, was her masterpiece and proper medium, but the twenty-one poems which were her reluctant contribution to *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*, being more personal in expression, body forth a spirit bright, particular, terrific in import, though ununified. Charlotte Brontë once called her sister Emily "stronger than a man, simpler than a child". Harsh and incalculable powers worked in Emily; something bleak and at the same time beauty-loving. Poetry came as natural to her as looking out of her two eyes. She wrote to please no one but herself. When Charlotte found her manuscript and read it, hours were required "to reconcile her". Publication was of small moment; all that really mattered was the wild spirit—the God—in her breast, and when she spoke God resolved Himself into driving stanzas, with distinct outlines and a promise of permanence.

> There is not room for Death,
> Nor atom that his might could render void:
> Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
> And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

I see much less substance and feel much less impact in Elizabeth Barrett Browning, she of the great learning, the romantic courtship, the cruel father, the long sojourn in Italy. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which the Victorians held in such reverence, are too much an attitude. They represent what Mrs. Browning thought love should be rather than what love is. They are over bright, like the eyes of a fever patient, accelerated like the fever patient's pulse. Her intellect, which promised so much, does not keep pace with her emotions, which go sticky. Even the poems of sympathy with factory-workers spread; they are without a firm bone-structure underneath. But "Grief", a sonnet from the Portuguese, is shriven of weakness, lifted above femininity, and great; and since every artist has a right to be judged by her best work, we must include Elizabeth Barrett Browning among the first women poets.

Christina Rossetti, who generously called Mrs. Browning the "Great Poetess of my own day and nation", does not win that privilege of place by one poem or two poems or three but by a hundred authentic, spiritually dynamic, and clear-as-cold-water lyrics. Her own sonnet sequence, *Monna Innominata*, is more moving and genuine than the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*; they are simple statements of overwhelming emotion; they use the tone of voice of one so close to the judgment-day when all will be told that candor gains nothing, loses nothing, but is a kind of peace.

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The hope I dreamed of was a dream,
Was but a dream; and now I wake,
Exceeding comfortless, and worn, and old,
For a dream's sake.

I hang my harp upon a tree,
A weeping willow in a lake;
I hang my silenced harp there, wrung and snapt
For a dream's sake.

Lie still, lie still, my breaking heart;
My silent heart, lie still and break:
Life, and the world, and mine own self, are changed
For a dream's sake.

In every woman are all women and in every woman is something which is no other woman in the world. The peculiar essence of Christina Rossetti was martyr-like. Though twice in love she never married. Difference of religion was the excuse she gave and there is no doubt that she was a rigid devotee of the Anglican Church, but the reasons were deeper rooted. She was afraid of anything with the slightest hazard. She was afraid of change to the core of her being. And no mortal could satisfy her. She was in love, when all was said and done and analyzed, not with James Collinson, not with Charles Bagot Cayley, but with Jesus Christ. Thus her passionate Southern nature (she was three-quarters Italian, although a native of London) vented itself in poetry which, for lyric hope and terror, for directness (instead of that circuitousness usually—and rightly—attributed to women), for emotional concentration, can scarcely be surpassed. *From House to Home* is more a revelation than a poem; in it the woman breaks beyond her own boundaries.

A capacity for ecstasy with its corresponding capacity for suffering marked her, and marks most of these women as surely as a hair-line of carmine around his throat marked, for Goethe, one man's doom.

For each ecstatic instant
We must an anguish pay
In keen and quivering ratio
To the ecstasy.

Emily Dickinson wrote that. Emily Dickinson cut through quivering nerves to the raw substance of her experience. Love, nature, God, the soul, a bumble-bee, sudden death, time. . . . Hardly anything escaped the sharp scrutiny of her great brown eyes. How many phrases she must have rejected until, with infinite precision, she welcomes into her mind the right phrase! There is something uncanny, psychical, more than mortal about her perceptions. This demure spinster in a New England garden, contemporary with Walt Whitman but unaware of him, had a soul like a thunder-storm and a mental make-up which would have awed some of the polite residents of Amherst could they have guessed its proportions, and terrified others. Her stern intellect checked constantly on precipitous emotions. Faith in ultimates made her spinster's life less lonely and her staccato verses vast in their implications. She embroidered her thoughts with a fine needle; the sharp point stabbed; she delighted in quaint design. That peculiar gift of some women, the ability to see the macrocosm in the microcosm, was hers in magnificent degree. She could not have the man she loved; but she had the robins and the small rain and thoughts which filled the universe.

Four other dead women deserve the dignity of being mentioned with Emily Dickinson: Alice Meynell, Charlotte Mew, Amy Lowell and Elinor Wylie. Personally I believe that the prose of Alice Meynell, slight in volume, surpasses in quality the poetry of Alice Meynell, also slight in volume. Her essays on children, *The Darling Young*, are so *right*, so lovely, compassionate without condescension, tender like the whole suppressed heart of an undemonstrative mother. Her poems show a finished and exquisite workmanship, but there is something sterile in them, the sterility of too much *mere* mind; there is nothing in them strict and precious, to be copied out and read when no one is near.

As for Charlotte Mew, that rare, shy, unhappy spirit, I think she has never received

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full credit for what she was. If she had written nothing but "I Have Been Through the Gates" her eligibility to immortality would be established. The personality discovered in her restrained output of work is delicate; the integrity absolute; the hope and the despair so great that we are disturbed and stretched to new dimensions, reading her.

Compared to that genius, that beat of rain on rich-soaking earth, Amy Lowell sounds shallow, like rain on a tin roof. Amy Lowell's images are good, but the phrase is often better than the line and the line better than the poem. She writes a poem as if she did not have to write that poem. "Patterns" remains in the memory precisely because the poem is not obscured by its parts; one significant philosophical idea dominates. Amy Lowell's reputation during her life was out of all proportion to her talent; the public was dazzled by polished surfaces so that their eyes dilated and hurt and they did not look for spirit; they were deceived by her air of authority and her fearless voice. "But the poem called 'Patterns'?" Yes, you are right. "And the poem about lilacs in New England?" Yes, in spite of all I have said, the poem about lilacs in New England is really beautiful; it is the simple side of a complex, egotistic, tender, introverted, blustery, modern woman.

Elinor Wylie was not so obvious and not at all blustery. Whatever we decide she was, she was probably quite different in the irreducible minimum of her soul. Like fire she would not stop for analyzing and now that the hearth is empty, what shall we say? This is certain: she was a developing character, a developing artistic power, although the gleam, the glory, was not constructed but born. Her last book, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, immeasurably surpassed *Nets to Catch the Wind* and *Black Armour*. It was as if just before relinquishing breath she took a deeper breath than she had ever taken before. In *Black Armour* there is said a thing that is stoic and clear:

> Now let no charitable hope
> Confuse my mind with images
> Of eagle and of antelope:
> I am in nature none of these.
>
> I was, being human, born alone;
> I am, being woman, hard beset;
> I live by squeezing from a stone
> The little nourishment I get.
>
> In masks outrageous and austere
> The years go by in single file;
> But none has merited my fear,
> And none has quite escaped my smile.

But *Angels and Earthly Creatures* was written on a higher eminence. Here is not only the negative bravery of bearing but the positive bravery of progressing—

> Get up; get up, for heaven's sake,
> And climb to the top of the hill.

And she climbed. And the sonnet sequence in *Angels and Earthly Creatures* has the unmistakable accent of serene, perfectly resolved lyric poetry. She who died is and will be alive.

The others whom we have to consider are alive, literally. The outstanding woman poet today is Edna St. Vincent Millay. Some of her sonnets, and notably those beginning "Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare" and "Pity me not" and "Here is a wound that never will heal, I know", and "Sweet sounds, oh, beautiful music, do not cease!", and the poems called "Renascence", "My Heart, Being Hungry", "Feast", "God's World", if placed in one volume and never added to, would be proof of an exceptional, honest, forever young, forever disillusioned, forever believing, fearless, clean spirit. No matter that the voice has at times condescended to trivialities—no matter. Fine and uncorrupt is her mainspring of song; so unchoked, so innocent that no pretence can stand up long. Her poems at their best are simple the way Wordsworth's Lucy poems are simple, and Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, and Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears".

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Strangely enough it is this quality of simplicity which Léonie Adams, who treads close behind Edna St. Vincent Millay in spirit, sense and significance, is in danger of losing. *Those Not Elect* was a sensitive first book. The tone was not the tone of Léonie Adams's generation; it was faintly archaic; it was distinctly and distinctively metaphysical; but the meaning was timeless. *High Falcon* repeats all the virtues of *Those Not Elect*, heightens them in some instances—"Ghostly Tree", the first two verses of "The Lonely Host", the third verse of "The Horn", "Bell Tower", "The River in the Meadows", "Evening Sky", "Sundown", and "Twilit Revelation"—but adds, occasionally, the vices of obscurity, of not knowing where to leave off, of seeing the world static and therefore just a little dead.

Other women poets alive today range from the weakest magazine contributors to individuals of rare accomplishment. In England Anna Wickham can write verses like the sure tread of an Amazon:

> Let us thank Almighty God
> For the woman with the rod.
> Who was ever and is now
> Strong essential as the plough.

The pans in her kitchen shine with universal meaning. Edith Sitwell changes a verb of sight to a verb of taste and superintends a bizarre revelation. Sylvia Townsend Warner quaintly and wilfully names a familiar thing and pierces the heart. In America women feel their sex and inadvertently confess it almost every time they write a couplet. Louise Bogan is that best creation, a woman who can meet any man on his own intellectual grounds. Her poetry tends a little toward the over-involved and abstruse, like Elinor Wylie and Léonie Adams at their least admirable, but she is capable of summoning a whole spiritual and psychical history in a few lines. Lola Ridge is more spectacular without being more profound; but her wide sympathy for human beings, not frequent in women and inadequately begun by such women as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, makes her an important index to the future. Hilda Doolittle ("H. D.") outlasts the vogue of imagism because of an exquisite ear, a Greek sense of balance, and an almost flawless technique in the singing of love and death. Jean Starr Untermeyer is all concentrated woman, extremely personal, underscored and intense. Sara Teasdale does not escape sentimentality, but at times she rises to cadences as unselfconscious and unassuming as a folk-song. Genevieve Taggard is a paradox; she has a strong personality and she writes well, but she cannot keep readers from perversely forgetting her personality when the book is closed. As for Nathalia Crane, it matters not whether she is six, sixteen, or sixty, she wrote the song in "Tadmor" and "The dust has its reasons wherever it goes".

If these examples prove that the poetry of women will always be different from the poetry of men, what does the difference consist of? Women write about trees, sky, earth, fire, and the four seasons. So do men. Women write about time, the soul, the hunt for God, the frightened spirit, and death. So do men. Women write about love, parting, meeting, waiting, and the fulfilment in time which predicts and is eternity. But so do men. In fact men write on some panoramic subjects which women have only glimpsed in passing. Men have taught certain things to women. One cannot study the lives of the outstanding women poets without noticing the profound influence of fathers upon daughters. It is true that Sappho's father, according to Ovid, died when she was six, and that Edna Millay's mother was to her father and mother. But of Emily Brontë with her forbidding father, Christina Rossetti with her fiery scholarly one, Alice Meynell with her distinguished one, Elizabeth Barrett Browning with her difficult one, Emily Dickinson with her legal and adored one, and Nathalia Crane with her magnificent and unique one, it might be said, as Dryden said of Lady Ann

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Killigrew, "Thy father was transfused into thy blood".

But even when the father's influence is most apparent, even when the so-called masculine qualities of intellect and will are uppermost, there is a residue, there is a secret something, which belongs to woman and belongs to no man. What? Searching among her literary vices we find sentimentality, narrow scope, over-subjectivism, vanity, preoccupation with self in a kind of bright egotism, lack of cosmic sense and lack of historical sense. Searching with renewed hope among her virtues we find sheer sensitivity to bodied or unbodied stimuli; intimacy of treatment, patience with form, tenderness and tact with small things and the ability to see in small things terrific things, pronounced spirituality, emotional maturity—and let it never be forgotten that emotion is the raw stuff of poetry. Now we have only to put out our hand. We have seen her slant; we have surprised her shadow on the opposite wall; almost we have her distinguishing quality. It is in her personal and maternal history that we find the rewarding clue. By intensifying inward she has lost the ability to see very far outward, but she has perfected her ability to give on paper *the innermost sensations*. That is not trivial. We live in sensations.

But sensations do not make an epic and it is an epic that we look toward and hope for. How will woman grow to the epic-making stature? Not by listening to men say: "What a big book for such a little head!" By reading the big book. By remembering the past and conjecturing the future. By being faithful to small things and unafraid of, addicted to, big things. By increasing her love for people, any kind of people, dead or alive, mean or godlike. By claiming the freedom and grandeur of the impersonal. By allying herself with the great movements of history instead of the small ineffectual movement of her particular life, in truth for its own sake instead of those artificialities, those dramatizations of a mood, those half-truths which *sub specie æternitatis* are lies. Woman can do this. She is beginning to do this.

The epic that one of them will write may not be written for half a century; it may be written next year. And whether it is about Eve's temptation or the rape of the Sabines or Jesus's mother, it will contain all that women are today, and more. And when it stands in black and white on a printed page, none of those readers who have "gone so cold that no fire can ever warm them" will confuse its authorship with a man. For men are something else again.

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MAIL-ORDER ROMANTIC REALISM

by Henry Morton Robinson

You are weary, let us say, of the gumshoe demi-volts of Edgar Wallace and Inspector Van Dine; the arch dialogue of Phyllis Bottome has palled at last; in such a vein you couldn't be annoyed by the psychologic minutiae of an O'Flaherty or a Proust. It seems, General Reader, that you are in parlous shape—for even the Reverend Cadman's counsel turns to ashes and aloes in your mouth. You would relax and read if you could, but in all the book-club offerings there is nothing that matches your spiritual complexion; a hundred publishers, sniping with their cunningly-wired cross-bows, have not even grazed the albatross of your fancy. You are on the verge of turning again to your bound copies of the old *Dial*, when your eye falls gratefully upon the stocky volume that the postman dumped at your door this morning. As you live and breathe, someone has sent you a Mail Order Catalogue!

Even though you never spent your childhood poring over Mail Order Catalogues, you think you know what they are like. But you really don't. You may have seen them lying around that up-state farmhouse where you boarded one summer, and you may think they are full of hayrakes, bicycle pumps, cream separators and shotguns. Well, so they are—but that's only a part of the story. You smile knowingly as you glance at the pictures of ladies in their underthings! Yes, it is easy to understand why the catalogues are so popular in the rural districts—

But, actually, you don't understand the half of it. For here, lying across your knees, is the thickest, highest-priced, most authentic, American document in print—a veritable source book of our national modes and manners—a golden treasury of the most fascinating commercial literature that is being turned off in these states today. Literature that is something more than beautiful letters, or *Caravan* realism. Literature that wrings tears of desire from human turnips, and strikes cash sparks from human flints. Literature that holds twenty million readers spellbound through long winter evenings, making your penny-a-word fiction-millers seem pallid, damp and unprofitable. If you think I'm exaggerating, just try the grand old literary test. Ask any Catalogue addict what three books he'd take along with him to the desert island of film and story. Will he say, "The Bible, the dictionary, and Charles Lyell's *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*"? He will not. Without a moment's higgling he'll reply:

"Three Mail Order Catalogues".

Such, at any rate, would be my answer. And having lived in close communion with my catalogues for many years now, I feel peculiarly fitted to tell you something of their infinite variety and unwitherable charm.

Primo, a Catalogue of the first water, contains about a million eight hundred thousand pictures, and as Messrs. Fox, Loew, Schenck, *et al.* have discovered, pictures are

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pretty good fun. To say that a Mail Order Catalogue is "profusely illustrated" is cagey understatement. They have more illustrations than a bog has cranberries. As you flip the picture-stuffed pages you have to admit that the gang-plows, horse collars, and sheepskin coats are mighty gorgeous-looking; that the five-color press work is exceeding smooth; and that the layout man who put together the furniture section certainly knew his graphs. Somewhere, you've heard that the artists who turn out "catalogue art" get five dollars per human figure. Well, they are underpaid benefactors to humanity, these artists, because all their people are robustiously handsome, smiling and well dressed. Even in gingham aprons and dust caps the catalogue girls are ravishing. The fat women (special sizes 46-58) burst with nothing more than chubby health; and to see the banker-type plumber in overalls makes one want to be a mechanic.

It certainly stimulates the blood to see these splendid people handling auger bits, buck-saws, and floor-scrapers. It looks so easy, so inevitable, that you want to lay in a set of auger bits immediately. And how ruddily the catalogue family glows as its ranges itself around the Heatmora oil stove. How happily they smile as they tune in with a Sonophono, or pick out their twelve easy lessons on a genuine Dance-o-matic zither. They are the personification of successful Americans, these Catalogue folk—and their world is so full of a number of things that I'm sure they must all be as happy as R. L. Stevenson would have liked to jolly the rest of us into being.

But enough of pictorial art. Let your eye now pick up a sentence from the thick paragraph of descriptive type that accompanies every picture. Doesn't it give a fillip to your jaded style-sense? You pick up and read, breathlessly, *marchingly* (as the reviewers say), punctuating the medium-sized hours of the morning with ecstatic whoops of sheer deliberate joy. And when you turn the last page you are conscious (as the reviewers also say) that a big and authentic voice has been heard at last amid the jangling confusion of American letters. For you have become aware of Catalogue Style—than which the Parnassian *chefs d'école* never wrote anything more luscious, well-buttered, or circumstantially detailed.

Catalogue Style, you discover, is cousin german to Menu Style—and by Menu Style I mean the "extra large portion of plump, milk-fed, specially-selected roast chicken with side order of lima beans" school of writing. This kind of writing not only describes, but makes your mouth water while describing. The comparison between the two styles (here pointed out by this writer for the first time) is strikingly close, but as a matter of fact the Menu writer gets all the breaks. You come to him predisposed, weakened by hunger, more than ready to be sold. He merely plays up and down your salivary gamut—and you pay the check. But the Catalogue author is playing with a cold deck. He must transfix you, not with a glittering eye or skinny hand, but with a hot-spot vocabulary and a heavily-raisined style. He has to smear you between the doorbell and the door, and if he lets you answer the doorbell he is lost. Therefore he begins making noun-and-verb passes at you as soon as he catches your eye. He writes in rainbow-colored ink on a polychromatic page. Suppose, for example, that he has some oddments of china he wishes to dispose of. Does he say, "Nice Cups and Saucers . . . $1.95"? Nothing of the kind. He browses through a page of W. H. Hudson just to get a whiff of manner, and delivers the following:

> Spain is all the rage this year, and a breath of old Madrid is wafted over this rich set of tea-table china and accessories. Lovely yellow, banded with ivory, bearing a neat embossed design of flower sprays in rose-tangerine, deep blue and amber-gold. Delicate embossings at top and bottom, traced in exquisite shades of Lincoln green. Dark or light green handles. Carefully packed in a handsome gift-box, just

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the thing for a wedding or anniversary g
We pay postage, and remember—your orc
filled the same day as received.
Price per set, only.....$1.5

Or suppose there is a shipment of shoes to be worked off on the readers. The Catalogue author chopsticks viz.,

OUR BOND STREET SPECIAL

Just out! Exact copy of an English custom shoe worn in all the swanky London clubs. Design of the two shoes identical. Look at the fancy wing tip, the square eyelets, the bulldog toe, and the stylish stitching. Upper of fine black imported calfskin, guaranteed to give you service equal to its appearance.

This Bond Street copy also has the regular English type bleached-calf lining, leather counter, and special rubber insert. Smooth leather soles of best hickory; leather heels with metal plug to prevent slipping and for months of extra wear. State size and width. We pay postage. Your order shipped same day (etc.). Price, with extra pair of lacings,.....$3.59

And money well spent, as you will discover when the shoes arrive! Indeed, part of the charm of Catalogue shopping lies in unwrapping the package and finding that the article so lusciously described is even better than its description. What is to be deduced from this pleasant discrepancy? Can it be that Catalogue prose deliberately *understates* the case, and that the composers of these thick paragraphs are consciously employing a nice restraint in crying their goods?

After a careful analysis of four hundred and fifty-two specimens of Catalogue prose, I am sure that this genre is founded on the same principle that supports all good writing. Founded on solid fact, it is reared in lofty imagination. As Santayana has said, and as Dante and Plato said before him, "every material phenomenon is capable of an ideal extension". Well, these catalogue writers certainly idealize their phenomena—yet they never stray a comma's breadth from the actual facts. The editors—I mean the owners—of the Catalogues have found that it is bad business policy to deviate by the nuance of a tinted adjective from the truth. If they said that a lap robe was magenta and it turned out to be burgundy, or if they suggested that there were one hundred and sixty-eight teeth on a one hundred and sixty-seven-toothed saw, there would be ructions in Millville that could be heard all over the catalogue circuit. Hence the Catalogue is another true story magazine, with about ten thousand times more thematic variety than its newsstand rivals.

Who reads these Catalogue true stories, and how seriously do they take their reading matter? Is the Catalogue in danger of being supplanted by the chain store? This is a weighty matter, and must not be decided by arm-chair committees. But from my personal observation I can testify that the Catalogue is having a great vogue in the rural districts about this time of year. And when I learn that the largest mail order house in the world spent over a million dollars publishing its 1930 edition, I strongly suspect the Catalogue audience is not thinning out very rapidly.

Suburbanites and city-dwellers don't go in for Catalogue reading, and I suppose there are fifty million people in the United States who have never thumbed a Catalogue. But your dirt-farming up-stater and your R.F.D. correspondent still swear by their Book. Never a farmhouse or village dwelling that hasn't a library of Catalogues from the Big Three mail order houses. Even though the farmer doesn't intend or can't afford to buy anything, he likes to look at the pictures of the improved patent gear-shifts (seven speeds forward) for Ford trucks, or read the glowing description of the Bond Street knob-toe, fancy-stitched knee-boots. So do I; so would you if you could see them. And, though the country wife has never seen a genuine Reboux or Descat, she likes to be told by Catalogue scribes that No. RXM 5638-h is an authentic copy of the real Parisian article. If in an earlier age she cut the pretty pictures

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out and pasted them onto the kitchen wall, she now clips them figuratively and patterns herself in their image and likeness.

I once spent a hot afternoon in a Montana ranch house, forty miles from town, and the only reading matter in that tin-roofed shack was a glossy new Catalogue. And I have spent cold evenings in Wisconsin farmhouses, and rainy Sundays in Vermont hostelries (American plan) where the only literature in sight was a thousand-paged, multistoried Catalogue for the current year. They always look good to me, these Catalogues, no matter where I meet them—and I always order some kind of a gadget once a year to keep my name on the mailing lists.

If you have never read a Catalogue and don't know the ritual, suppose I tell you how to go about it. Let your back log be of white oak, seasoned a full year on the wood pile; the cider to be a mixed and not too innocent crush of pippin, baldwins and greenings; tobacco and lamp to your own taste, snow in the air, the children in bed, a day's work behind you and a copy of the latest Mail Order Catalogue open across your knees. . . .

I do not know of any more effective recipe for a mild sort of happiness.

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CRITICISM IN AMERICA

II. THE REVIVAL OF THE ANTI-HUMANIST MYTH

by Seward Collins

THE journalistic blockade against Paul Elmer More, Irving Babbitt and their allies, which had lasted from the time the *Nation* turned liberal in 1918—except for the almost secret last years of the *Unpopular Review* and the fleeting career of the *Weekly Review*—was finally broken at the beginning of 1928. A young pupil and admirer of Babbitt engineered a series of articles in the *Forum* in which Babbitt, More, and Sherlock Bronson Gass, in discussions of current literature, presented the humanist position for the first time that it had been seen in American journals in a decade. Two more articles followed discussing the deeper problems involved in humanism, written from the religious point of view by T. S. Eliot and Michael Williams. The articles, it is true, made very little stir. They were doubtless thought by most readers to spring from a quaintly misguided search for topics on the part of a magazine of controversy. But they augured a new era in American criticism, and there were those who grasped the fact.

While the *Forum* articles were progressing through 1928 two books appeared which made unmistakeably clear to the alert-minded that new forces were entering the critical scene. Gorham B. Munson's *Destinations* showed that the young men of the latest generation were turning to More and Babbitt for leadership. Norman Foerster's *American Criticism* informed the academic world that some of its ablest minds were taking their principles from the same source. This double attack of the two books, one in scholarship and one in free-lance journalism, had ultimately a great effect in preparing public opinion for the later events though at the time few could have realized their symptomatic importance.

If no need was felt as yet for a concerted attack on the incipient movement, individual replies to the *Forum* series and to the two books were not lacking. More's penetrating survey of current writers was not commented on until its appearance in book form the following year, but Babbitt's discussion of American criticism and Mencken's shortcomings drew instant fire. A liberal professor of English, Mr. Howard Mumford Jones, rushed a hot reply to the *New Republic* (March 21, 1928) which might have served as a model for the *New Republic's* later efforts along the same lines in its self-assured ignorance, its misrepresentation, and its speciousness. Mr. Jones revived with energy the unfounded notion—which no one can honestly hold who has read the first paragraph and a half of *Rousseau and Romanticism*—that Babbitt considers Rousseau the cause of modern evils. This method of debating by ascribing an absurdity and then proving it absurd, so popular in the offices of the *New Republic* and elsewhere, made it easy for

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him to convict Babbitt of "deterministic naturalism" and "the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy".

Similar tactics led Mr. Jones to decide, for no visible reason, that two unrelated phrases used by Babbitt ("inner control" and "general critical intelligence") had the same meaning. The lengthy passage in which he proved this absurdity to be absurd was almost worthy of Allen Tate's genius for imitation subtlety. By suggesting that Babbitt would find it difficult "to explain the precise difference between the gloom of Sophocles and the gloom of Theodore Dreiser . . . between the hopelessness of Antigone and of Œdipus, and the hopelessness of *An American Tragedy*", Mr. Jones demonstrated that only lack of space prevented him from anticipating the colossal fatuity along these lines which we shall see later in the case of the *New Republic's* own Edmund Wilson. Mr. Jones concluded by finding "hopeless confusion" and "a naïve world-scheme" in the fact that Babbitt admires much in both the classical and the Christian traditions, proceeding to break the news to Babbitt that the two traditions are not without conflicting elements.

Mary Colum did the honors for the romantic naturalists in the case of *Destinations* (*Saturday Review of Literature*, June 30, 1928). She pronounced Mr. Munson "peculiar" for urging classicism in American literature, and rebuked him for reviving "the old quarrel between classicists and romanticists so beloved of the academic mind". Furthermore, his ideas on these themes are wrong: "Unfortunately for Mr. Munson he takes his ideas of romanticism from Irving Babbitt's disorderly mind, and particularly from his amorphous book *Rousseau and Romanticism*". Mr. Munson's other guide is equally unreliable: "It would be very easy to show that Mr. Paul Elmer More has far more of a tendency towards Romanticism than towards Classicism". Mrs. Colum has been urged on several occasions to make this easy demonstration, but the world still awaits this contribution to scholarship.

If the academics *will* play these silly word games, Mrs. Colum will teach them how it should be done. "It clearly behooves me at this point to produce some definition in an attempt to clarify the confusion with which Mr. Babbitt, Mr. Munson and the younger demi-academic minds have bewildered us." Accordingly, out comes a definition: "A romantic literature is a literature which places more importance on will, desire, and emotion than upon intellect. A classical literature, on the other hand, places most importance on the intellect". I am sure that the academics, both full and demi, were carried away by the originality and profundity of this definition. Though I daresay some of them concluded that Mrs. Colum's description of *Rousseau and Romanticism* as amorphous and bewildering arose from an unsuccessful attempt to wrestle with it.

It is not surprising to learn further from Mrs. Colum that Babbitt, with his disorderly mind, and More, with his fake classicism, "have really never understood English literature". But their chief disability is that they are academic, and for the most part Mrs. Colum finds that "what passes as devotion to Classicism in universities and halls of learning is nothing more than an inclination towards thin and meagre forms of life, a temperamental desire to be on the safe side". How the journalist loves to take all life for his exclusive province! Mrs. Colum quickly reveals that her anti-academicism is, as usual, but a part of a general anti-respectability. She informs us that the terms romantic and classic "have no real application" in America, since our literature has been neither classical nor romantic but instead (do not blame me if Mrs. Colum's logic eludes you) has suffered from the fact that not only our professors, but American writers in general, "are meagre in their experience of life and literature". She makes her meaning clear in the question that forms her concluding para-

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graph: "How many American writers are there whose most extensive awareness of life, has been bounded by crude or elementary sex experience, or limited to helping their wives to wash the baby, sow the flower seeds, mow the lawn, and do a little house work?" Make note of the critical principle that Mrs. Colum reveals here: that normal family life is fatal to a writer. It recurs in nearly every one of her critical writings.

We saw in Part One of this article how generous Mr. Lewis Mumford could be to Babbitt when Babbitt seemed safely dead. But when Professor Foerster's *American Criticism* proved Babbitt to be very much alive, he dashed to do battle in the *New Republic*, proclaiming against "the tedious party war-cries and the empty party labels . . . the solecisms and the narrow acerbities of the 'new humanists'". Improving on Mrs. Colum, he insisted that "except as historical catchwords, classicism and romanticism mean nothing at all". But he is with her in his main line of attack: "The new humanism is not humanism at all: it is the old academicism". And everyone knows what academics are. "Their fear of 'expansiveness', their distrust of spiritual audacity, their high regard for correctness, their curious belief in restraint as the ultimate ethical principle—what are these qualities but the petty requirements of their academic environments?" It might have been a sentence out of *Letters and Leadership*, even to the Brooksian device of disguising a dogmatic (and absurd) assertion as a question. You are led to think for a moment that Mumford could not have read Babbitt, and did not know that his "curious belief in restraint" is shared by the great ethical teachers of history (Aristotle, to be sure, studied at the first Academy: does that make him academic?); but then you remember that Mumford has read not only Babbitt but a great many other things besides; and you wonder at the lack of communication between the compartments of his mind. The humanist restraint, or selectiveness, he dismisses as "exclusion", and urges Professor Foerster to forget the humanist "*clichés* of thought" and discover "that Walt Whitman was a far better humanist than Mr. Babbitt".

If Mumford at such moments recalls to us the dear dead days of 1918, an even earlier period was heard from in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, where *American Criticism* was entrusted, rather unaccountably, to that pale, ineffectual ghost of pragmatism, Horace M. Kallen. It is amusing to see Professor Kallen, a life-long academic, join Mary Colum and Lewis Mumford in scoffing at the "preoccupations of professors, doctrines and disciplines of the schools". More in character, if no more cogent, is his description of humanism as "the last faint gasp of secularized Calvinism, the frayed latter end of the genteel tradition". By way of climax Professor Kallen pronounced humanism "a lot of boloney", which would seem to be the frayed latter end of the Jamesian tradition of enlivening philosophical discourse with informality and bounce.

II

But these preliminary rumbles of the spring of 1928 were isolated. It was only during the course of the following year that the sense of real power from the direction of Babbitt and More began to circulate among critics, editors and publishers. This was in part the effect of the considerable interest manifested abroad, where articles appeared in T. S. Eliot's influential *Criterion* (which indeed had been from its founding in 1922 the single exception to the blockade), and in the *Nineteenth Century*, and where the first book on the subject was published, Louis Mercier's *Le Mouvement humaniste aux Etats Unis*. In this country the *Forum* articles continued. The young men of the *Hound and Horn*, a Harvard echo of the *Criterion*, showed signs of being aware of Eliot's early masters. In December of 1928 THE BOOKMAN began a succession of articles on humanism.

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More's *Demon of the Absolute*, issued at the end of 1928, his first book of literary criticism since the beginning of the decade, received the proper quota of damnations, but it came a little too early for most of the critics to consider it worth any special effort. And this in spite of the fact that half of it was a direct, powerful challenge to all the notions prevailing among them and a detailed discussion of most of the leading authors. There was only one notable review, by Allen Tate, in the *New Republic*. Mr. Tate was not entirely imperceptive, and at least recognized the book as "a literary event of the first order, and a challenge in its turn: the younger men will now have to make up their minds about Mr. More; his attitude is unmistakable". He also granted "the general soundness of his views", and that "his diagnosis of the distress of the modern spirit is accurate and profound". But he proceeded to diagnose More, and perpetrated the first of those fantastic exhibitions of pseudo-subtlety, pseudo-profundity and irresponsibility which finally made it necessary for Robert Shafer, as BOOKMAN readers know, to discredit him as a critic of the subject.

By the spring of 1929 Babbitt, More and humanism were becoming topical allusions. One by one the critics took occasion to squelch this ridiculous recrudescence of a defunct and obnoxious school. In March Harry Hansen, the New York *World's* astute literary reporter, took notice of the mounting wave, his first remarks, more or less naturally, harking back to the days when his book page in the Chicago *Daily News* was one of the main avenues for the swift and noisy arrival of the man of the twenties, and when his Wednesday column was likely to be a salute to a new novel by Floyd Dell or a book of poems by Carl Sandburg as the greatest thing since *Leaves of Grass* (intended as a high compliment). Reviewing Waldo Frank's *The Rediscovery of America*, Mr. Hansen said, "Mr. Frank effectively punctures the delusion of Gorham Munson and others that Irving Babbitt has any living message for modern times. 'Actually he has nothing, since he rejects our chaos and his refusal sterilizes understanding. . . . He is out of touch with what is pregnant and vital in our country.' Which is, of course, the truth in a nutshell". Mr. Frank had also said of Babbitt that he is "the man who with most ambition has challenged our modern problems. His work has much to commend it for influence on young America". But on the other hand, in Mr. Frank's peculiar idiom, "Something is in Babbitt which disqualifies him from leadership, which makes ineffectual his judgments". And thus quickly do the books of 1929 need revision in 1930.

A month later Mencken was talking in the *Saturday Review of Literature* about "the windy music which so-called humanists chant so depressingly". Not all the critics, to be sure, were aware of the course of events. In May Edmund Wilson remarked of the literary scene that "One has no consciousness of any movement today. . . There are no particular ideas in the air, and no discoveries rising to the horizon". This was in a review of the collection of Burton Rascoe's vivid reports of New York literary circles in the early twenties, a period in which Wilson, his writings would seem to indicate with increasing clarity, has become permanently mired.

The paragraph in which Henry Seidel Canby first noted that More and Babbitt "have been much on critical tongues of late", contained a perfect example of the kind of lamentable confusion which they are in the business of destroying. "Science is the great achievement of the modern world. . . . To desert in a body (this, of course, is the real danger) a passionate study of science in order to grapple with problems more directly concerned with the moral welfare of mankind, would be to repeat the experience of the Dark Ages". And that, in brief, is the trouble with American culture: that a man can attain the position of Dr. Canby and be so intoxicated by the developments of physical science as to be willing to subordinate morals, philosophy

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and literature to it, and to label any attempt to return science to its rightful place a danger to civilization. It ought to be apparent that this modern passionate infatuation with science is the most sinister aspect of the world today, and that unless there is something like a wholesale desertion from the exclusive concentration and blind worship which science has provoked, and a serious grappling with the problems of the moral welfare of mankind, a repetition of the Dark Ages is a certainty. Another such triumph of modern science as was witnessed in 1914-1918 would do it. (And that strange idea, derived presumably from nineteenth century rationalists or their survival in the Haldeman-Julius Blue Books, that the Dark Ages were darkened by the wilfully narrow preoccupations of the church!)

"No writer upon criticism," added Dr. Canby, "who cannot keep pace with and interpret the results of modern scientific thinking should be listened to in the next decade." It would be more accurate to say that no writer of criticism worthy of being listened to will bother his head very much about scientific thinking in the next decade or any other decade. I am using scientific thinking, of course, in the correct sense of exact observation applied to the external world and to that part of man susceptible of this process. The critic is concerned with what is left—that is, with humanity. Dr. Canby, in the fashion of the day, thinks of science as having crossed this impassible gulf, as witness this sentence: "Thanks to the sciences of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and the science in history, we can understand Moses, Plato, Mohammed, Calvin better than ever before". It makes one envious, does it not, of the men of the year 2030, for all they will know about Moses and Plato after a great many schools of psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, historiographers, endocrinologists, psychic researchers, and doubtless many new sciences have had time to succeed one another in fashion, each one, in the approved scientific manner, contributing its bit to the great structure of science—all of course adding up to a total very impressive and illuminating.—If anyone reading this does not yet know what humanism is, it might briefly be defined as a corrective to such Sunday-supplement "science", especially when respected in high places.

By the autumn of 1929 it was generally understood that the humanists were making a bid for power. Word got around that they were to issue some sort of manifesto early in the new year. It began to be whispered that young men in the colleges were deserting Mencken in droves and turning to the humanists, particularly Irving Babbitt. The veteran observers of the literary scene, of course, were aware of what such a tendency portended, and lost no opportunity to throw a little mud on the nascent uprising. T. S. Eliot's *For Lancelot Andrewes*, reprinting his *Forum* article on Babbitt, gave them all a chance. A still handier occasion was the publication of the life of Stuart Sherman, making clear for the first time the extent of Sherman's indebtedness to More and Babbitt. The book was almost universally given out for review to Sherman's friends, who to a man lamented his youthful contact with "Irving Babbitt, one of the most frigid of living dogmatists, and of Paul Elmer More, one of the best but also one of the narrowest and most repressive of American critics", as Mark Van Doren put it in the *Nation*.

The younger generation of critics, those who had grown up in the twenties, were a little vague as to what it was all about, and inclined to extend not unfriendly interest to this new movement that seemed to be exciting people. This attitude was given typical expression by Karl Schriftgiesser, of the *Boston Evening Transcript*, in his summary of the year's activities in literature and publishing. "Pick up almost any magazine from THE BOOKMAN up or down, and you will find considerable talk about Humanism. This philosophy of life and letters, which has been

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the especial target of Mencken's fury, and which has been so staunchly (and ambiguously) defended by Professors Babbitt and More, is gaining more credence all the time. . . . It used to be considered that Mencken defended the radical group, and Sherman and his henchmen the conservative, but it is evident that the theory of humanism goes much deeper than that. I confess that up to now it has me bewildered, but inasmuch as one finds the fight going on wherever one turns I am sure that it must be important."

Even some of the older critics, at this time, were hopefully curious about the new development, not through any love of it, but through dissatisfaction with the sterile monotone prevailing in American letters since the middle of the twenties, with the same spokesmen saying the same things and no one showing any capacity for leadership. Six months after his first automatic response noted above, Harry Hansen seemed almost glad to record, apropos of an article by Irving Babbitt in THE BOOKMAN, "Babbitt is getting a great deal of attention these days, now that our period of glorious spontaneity reaches its end and a revaluation of gains is in order". He even pronounced the article "eloquent" and "delightful reading", but hastened to add that Babbitt's "theories often act as a wet blanket on the fine enthusiasm of the living generation". By December the mounting signs of a change had convinced him that "the most remarkable phenomenon in American letters today is the complete bankruptcy of the naturalistic movement".

I am not making any attempt here to recount the reputation of More and Babbitt in the academic world, for which a separate article would be needed; but an exception might well be made of the *Sewanee Review*, a quarterly devoted largely to scholarship, but keenly alive to the currents of the day, never more so than under its present editor, Dr. William S. Knickerbocker. To Dr. Knickerbocker, in fact, should probably be given the credit for being the first opponent of the new humanists to realize that the movement was one worthy of aggressive attack. In the July, 1929, issue he was referring to the "literature accumulating rapidly in this newest battle of the books". He expressed admiration for the scholarship of some of the humanists, but condemned them on the whole for their "oracular and stiff assurance", "tight and impenetrable dependence on formulas", "unkindly light", and their "categorical dualism . . . unreal and wilfully devised upon a structure of nineteenth century naturalism, painfully indifferent to twentieth century modifications". Warming to his task, he discovered in the humanists pseudo-Aristotelianism, arrogant impatience, fatal ignorance, literary fascism, an arrested state of Victorian ethicism, inflexibility of understanding, a pathetic, dying fight for a specious notion of "culture", essential obscurantism, debased Calvinism, wilful dogmatisms and categories. "It is not new and it is not human. . . . It is battling with bogies which no one sees but itself. . . . It is the inevitable wish for rest of uncreative if not of hopeless minds."

Two issues later Dr. Knickerbocker returned to the battle, this time calling the humanists sterile, uncritical, and naïve; and referring to their bland ignorance, unseemly militancy, self-evident contradictions, rudimentary and easily satisfied consciences, rabbinical and Alexandrian sophistries. I list all these uncomplimentary epithets partly from a natural joy in displaying choice morsels of imbecility, but chiefly to draw attention to an early example of a kind of criticism to which the humanists have been abundantly subjected in the last few months. I mean the criticsm which attempts to discredit them completely and without discussion by dragging in irrelevant issues, instead of getting down to the real differences of opinion involved and seeking to provide refutation. Sometimes this method has taken the form of talking about "bad manners"; sometimes about "snobbishness"; sometimes the dis-

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qualifying accusation that the humanists are nearly, if not quite, Christian. You may be surprised to learn that Dr. Knickerbocker's chief complaint against the humanists is that they are not Christian enough. Actually, after using the epithets I have recorded, he had the effrontery to claim it as one of his principles, in contradistinction to the humanists, "to be charitable", and wound up his second article, after invoking Matthew Arnold disguised as J. E. Spingarn, with "a final reminder of the words of a greater humanist than Matthew Arnold: 'the kingdom of heaven cometh not by violence' ".

Dr. Knickerbocker should know that indulging in this sort of criticism is a certain way to bring on his head not peace but a sword. For his quarrel with humanism is not the religious quarrel; he nowhere discusses the real religious problems raised by humanism. He is protesting against the humanists' purely secular opinions; he attacks More, for instance, for the very opinions that More shares with Babbitt, ignorant of the fact (made clear in More's books) that More is a Christian. His whole article is a complaint (as the quotations above illustrate) against the humanists' insistence on standards, on clear-cut distinctions, on virile judgment. To this he opposes a flaccid, cloying sort of estheticism, believing it the critic's duty "to appreciate and not to legislate". I have no desire to slur Dr. Knickerbocker's religion, but if one were to judge only by the use he makes of it to belabor the humanists, one would have to conclude that his Christianity was a sort of nonsectarian club for esthetes, to which most Christians would prefer Babbitt's manly scepticism. In any case, to attack the humanists on such grounds is a peculiarly unpleasant mixture of the things that are God's and the things that are Pater's.

In the meantime an urgent call for assistance against the rising tide of humanism had gone overseas from the alert offices of the New York *Herald Tribune Books*, and at the end of December who should answer it but THE BOOKMAN's own Rebecca West? She had become annoyed to the point of incoherence by the "call to order" class of critics, as she termed them, and attempted at one blow to crush the whole movement in its American, English and French manifestations. Her success was something less than complete. (She tries again, on a larger scale, in next month's BOOKMAN.) Most of her article was given up to an onslaught on Julien Benda, and here I, for one, in spite of diligent study of his books in the light of the high praise of Irving Babbitt and T. S. Eliot, and in spite of the uncongeniality of Miss West's manner of writing about him, am willing to grant her complete success. He seems to me no useful ally of the humanist, "call to order", or "reactionary" movement (as you prefer), and Miss West is welcome to his scalp.

Now I yield to no one in my admiration for Miss West's brilliant gifts as a novelist, journalist and critic. I am sure that no magazine has ever had a more entertaining or more eagerly followed foreign correspondent than THE BOOKMAN has had for the last year and a half. But I daresay that not a few readers have had the same experience that I have had when reading her Letters from Abroad: that of being acutely embarrassed for her on seeing her, in the middle of some penetrating analysis, or eloquent appreciation, or devastating slating, or delightful fooling, suddenly abandon her native shrewdness and insight and fall back on the synthetic insight of some modern pseudo-science —usually not even the latest, but her own special amalgam of the Freudian and Jungian evangels that were so popular among the brighter literary sets ten and fifteen years ago. I was never so embarrassed for her as when this peculiarity led her, in the *Herald Tribune* article, to say of Paul Elmer More: "His views on literature are so interpenetrated by an obscure panic about moral customs which he is unable to bring up to the

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level of consciousness and criticize intellectually that it would be hard to keep from letting any discussion of him develop into a thesis on the neurosis which leads persons continually to wash their hands". Criticism in terms of psychoanalysis has long lost the only merit it ever had, novelty. And really, was there ever a blacker indictment of the modern mind and of a leading representative of it than this inability to distinguish between criticism involving morals and compulsion neuroses?

Miss West went on to discuss Irving Babbitt, "with whom nobody can disagree when he puts forth again and again as a condition of criticism the possession on the part of critics of a share in the cultural tradition which it is extremely hard for persons born of literate parents to escape". His humanism, it seems, is "nothing more than a compulsive process springing from levels much too far below the level of consciousness to be intellectually criticized, which keeps his work in a state of confusion". I am glad that Miss West was able to learn all that Babbitt has to teach her from her parents. But she is doing them no favor, I am sure, if she is suggesting that it was from them she learned that it was the part of wisdom to desert tradition and succumb to the nonsense of popular charlatans; and to sneer at the former with stale, meaningless phrases borrowed from the latter.

Returning to the timely theme in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dr. Canby properly rebuked Miss West for being "too ready to take modern psychology where it suits her purpose, and use it as she pleases". But, unfortunately, this was merely an example of the pot diagnosing the kettle: the very next week Dr. Canby was calling on the humanists not to pronounce on morals without studying the functions of the glands. "More triumphs have been won for wisdom by the rediscovery of instinct, and its measuring by science, than by the mere retaining of the old moral categories." The humanists' dualism (that is, their agreement with most of the great philosophers, moralists, and religious leaders of history that men differ in essence from the rest of nature; and that certain consequences flow from this difference), said Dr. Canby, "will seem a little jejune to readers who have been brought up in the new philosophy of science". Quite so. Just as Dr. Canby's illusion that he is acquiring wisdom when he is only swallowing the latest pseudo-scientific fads seems very comical, and a little tragic, to readers who are able to bring any discrimination to bear on the achievements of science. One of these achievements Dr. Canby singled out for special praise: "the scientific demonstration that matter is not a comprehensible reality". That must have been quite a hard demonstration to make: I should like to see just how it was done. Perhaps it was the work of the same super-scientist who has succeeded in measuring instincts.

It is not surprising that a science-intoxicated litterateur like Dr. Canby should imagine that it is "the program of some of the new humanists" (he mentions no names, naturally) "to wipe out the nineteenth century and to fall back uncompromisingly upon the great systems of Plato, of Aquinas, or of Descartes"; or that he should accuse them of dogmatism, pedantry, more prejudice than scholarship, Hebraic intolerance, and "denying such parts of life, and knowledge, as will not square with theory". The humanists, in turn, delight in receiving such epithets from so misguided a cultural guide. Though they would admit that Dr. Canby is better than most, in that he is willing to commit himself and put on paper what is in his mind. "It would seem that life and its accumulated knowledge must all be accepted as data before moral and philosophic choices can be made; and for this task we have as yet no one supremely competent, nor will have until the speed of experiment slackens, and the air grows clearer." There we have it: the eternal cry of the half-baked modernist: the morals and philosophy of the

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past are no longer valid; judgment must wait on the "facts"; the facts are not all in; let "experiment" go on, and judgment be suspended. Against that kind of thinking the humanists are implacably opposed: for it is under the sway of such speciousness and confusion that the forces that, without knowing it, make for barbarism are riding roughshod over the world while the defendants of civilization are only slowly getting into effective action against them.

III

But the events of 1928-1929 were only the beginning. Into the midst of the mounting interest in the new humanists and the first efforts to squelch them, the January, 1930, BOOKMAN, containing two outspoken humanist articles, dropped with something of the force of a bomb-shell. It was the first indication to most readers that there were going to be any fireworks, or that there were going to be any blows struck except on the hostile side. One of the articles, Robert Shafer's "Humanism and Impudence", was a merciless exposure of the confused reasoning and objectionable dialectical methods of a pretentious effort to blast the humanists' foundation on the part of a young critic, Mr. Allen Tate. The other article, "Farewell to the Twenties", was a general "razzing" of most of the ideas and figure-heads of the past dozen years in American letters.

The effect of the two articles was comical. Consternation and rage spread among the literati at the unheard of, unimagined spectacle of anybody vigorously championing, right out in cold print, the ideas of the two most distinguished critics in the country, and at the same time having the brazen nerve to say a few frank words about their contemporaries. The first, the automatic, the inevitable response from the custodians of the current order was that of New York's two daily book columnists, Harry Hansen of the *World*, and William Soskin, of the *Evening Post*: rebuking the humanists for being so unmannerly and inconsistent as to indulge in plain speaking and hard hitting, "vigor" being thought to be the invention of Mr. Mencken and the exclusive property of the anti-respectables. The manifest absurdity of being both conservative and alive quickly became a chronic source of complaint throughout the press.

Rage was succeeded by horror, and horror by panic, as the full realization of the situation came home: realization that the shallow Bohemians and buffoons, the befuddled science-worshippers, the irresponsible esthetes, the deluded sociologists who have dominated our literature and set the tone for much of our life in recent years were not going to be let off easily, were in fact going to be rigidly examined from some other viewpoint than that of mutual admirers and publishers' blurb writers. THE BOOKMAN had succumbed to the forces of evil, and other magazines were known to be somewhat sympathetic. At least one publishing house had humanist leanings. Where might not the plague break out next? What would become of the true faith that had been so gallantly fought for and with such difficulty carried to triumph? What would become of ready markets for manuscripts?

Denunciations began to flow from the press. The anti-humanist myth was quickly dragged out of storage. A multitude of ingenious minds set to work to bring it up to date and spread it broadcast. Their purpose was to "kill humanism at all costs". They took as their motto that immortal line of Philip Guedalla's which should have been the invention of G. K. Chesterton: "Any stigma will do to beat a dogma". Humanist magazine articles were scanned minutely for quotations which could be made to look absurd or repellant when lifted out of their context and surrounded by suitable remarks. Even some of the humanist books were, among the more hardy or the more desperate, looked into for the same purpose.

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The opening gun in this new high pressure anti-humanist crusade, apart from the incessant barrage of the dailies, was fired by Mr. Alter Brody, who was provoked by the "Farewell to the Twenties" into rushing a hot letter into the *New Republic* warning its readers that these advocates of Babbitt and More were dangerous champions of reaction, repression, intolerance, bigotry, etc.—all the dread qualities which the *New Republic* is under the impression that it opposes. Now in this of course, Mr. Brody was quite right; and in fact was bearing tribute either to the humanist powers of expression or his own powers of divination. For there could be no more explicit way of defining humanism than by saying that it is everything the *New Republic* is not; unless one were to say it is everything the *Nation,* or the *New Freeman,* or the *Herald Tribune Books* is not. To be considered bigoted and reactionary by these organs of imitation liberalism and sickly humanitarianism, is the surest possible proof that one is somewhere near the truth. It is perhaps not surprising that the only example Mr. Brody gave of the "encyclopedia of reaction" which he vaguely ascribed to the humanists was one that had no basis outside his own fevered imagination: "Nothing is left out—not even anti-Semitism". If it had merely been a matter of Mr. Brody's jumping before he was bitten, he would merely have been silly. But he was deliberately injecting racial prejudice into a literary and intellectual controversy, which was vicious; and at the same time he was identifying his own race with all the stupid and unhealthy elements in recent American life and writings, which was treacherous.

Mr. Henry Hazlitt, the newly appointed literary editor of the *Nation* and thus the latest inheritor of the mantle of Paul Elmer More, became so alarmed at the prospect of his predecessor's ghost walking again, and so zealous to atone for this skeleton in his new employer's closet, that he rushed an anti-humanist broadside into print after a preparation apparently consisting of reading a single magazine article of Babbitt's. But this, added to years of devotion to John Dewey and other leaders of what passes for philosophy among the emancipated, enabled him to start off with a bang: "Of all the strange crazes that sweep semi-annually over American criticism, surely none will seem odder to the future literary historian than the present attempt to pump life into that particular rationalization of reaction and gentility that passes at present under the name of humanism". Then to reassure the *Nation's* readers that the little round of slick modernistic ideas in which their minds are wont to circulate was the crowning word of the ages, he proceeded to "explain away" the new converts to humanism by listing the "motives" for this obnoxious tendency. They were: 1. Reaction from incoherent and barbarian writing; 2. The humanist leaders are (or rather, seem to be) better educated; 3. Classicism always follows romanticism; 4. Accepting an authority saves mental effort; 5. To those ignorant of science, its conclusions seem depressing; 6. Desire to have a definite point of view; 7. Desire to be on the band-wagon.

So many reasons, clashing together so violently, would seem to be excessive protestation; but I daresay they went down with the *Nation's* readers. Especially as it was straightway proved to them, by a quotation from Schopenhauer on Controversy and in two paragraphs, that "it is impossible to take Mr. Babbitt seriously as a thinker". Why, he even relies on "antiquated psychology"—an obvious disqualification now that human nature has begun to change so fast. For the rest, Mr. Hazlitt was content to pad out his meagre information with parroting of the current nonsense about Babbitt's "obsession, almost monomania" concerning Rousseau, the "negativeness" of decorum, and so on.

If the journalists had been scandalized by the rough treatment of the current literary heroes, Allen Tate's friends and admirers had been thoroughly outraged by Mr. Shafer's

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demolishment of him. Mr. Tate had written an article that raised two questions: the value of his ideas on the relation of humanism to religion; the propriety of his controversial methods. Mr. Shafer had demonstrated that in the first he was preposterous and in the second intolerable. Mr. Tate had sought to disqualify the whole humanist program by the argument that the only way to impose moral judgments is through an authoritative church, yet it turned out that he was not himself writing from the basis of belief in any church; in other words, that his argument was suicidal. He couched his attempt at a philosophical disquisition in a bumptious, snarling language, and involved himself in impenetrable tangles of misused philosophical verbiage and chaotic logic. Furthermore, he reached his contemptuously sweeping conclusions, seemingly by fair means, but actually by ignoring or elaborately distorting the evidence.

Mr. Shafer not only exposed the foolishness of Mr. Tate's argument, but was forced as a matter of common honesty to show also that Mr. Tate had used improper methods to reach his illegitimate conclusions, and to point out that the only possible verdict on Mr. Tate touched his integrity as a critic, whatever might be his private feelings as to his intentions. Mr. Shafer and THE BOOKMAN were at once assailed for "personal abuse", "ungentlemanly conduct", "rudeness", "scurrility" and so on. Not once, however, was an attempt made to defend either Mr. Tate's arguments or his methods, except for the vaguely general blanket defences of his friends. Of these I quote the most substantial, that of Mr. Donald Davidson, in the Nashville *Tennesseean*:

> In the Winter number of *Hound and Horn* appeared an article by Allen Tate, entitled "The Fallacy of Humanism", which had previously been published in *The Criterion* in England. Immediately on its appearance Mr. Tate's article was attacked, in the January BOOKMAN, by Robert Shafer, who, writing under the title of "Humanism and Impudence", indulged in violent personal abuse of Mr. Tate and attempted to refute his arguments.
>
> It is deplorable indeed that a critic of Mr. Tate's seriousness, learning, and conscience should be subjected to the vindictive scoldings and low insinuations of the angry Mr. Shafer. It is deplorable that THE BOOKMAN should admit personal abuse into its pages. It is deplorable that the cause of the Humanists should suffer from the advocacy of Mr. Shafer.
>
> But Mr. Tate's place as a critic is too well founded and his integrity is too well-known to suffer from a personal attack. As the target of Mr. Shafer's wild shafts, he will have the sympathy of all who have respect for propriety and intelligence. The damage that is done, is done to Humanism, to THE BOOKMAN, and to Mr. Shafer himself. How futile and weak must the cause of Humanism be if its defenders are forced to vilify their opponents in order to establish their principles against a serious criticism. Mr. Tate's article was a careful piece of dialectic, well documented, well reasoned, and animated by a regard for fundamental principles. Mr. Shafer's article is wrathful and injudicious, if not scurrilous; it offers the disgusting spectacle of a "humanist", presumably of mature and academic pursuits, giving way to a fit of silly rage when a young thinker proceeds to analyze and discuss the principles of humanism. We conjure our readers to allow no credit whatever to Mr. Shafer's insinuations against Mr. Tate's critical practice and state of information; there is no critic in the country more painstaking or more sensible of the responsiblities of the critic. And we invite our readers to consider the wretched conditions of disorder and bad taste that will allow such an attack as Mr. Shafer's to come to light at all.

It is noteworthy, and regrettable, that Mr. Davidson did not emulate Mr. Shafer by joining refutation of arguments and presentation of evidence to what Mr. Davidson could in his own case quite justly call "indulging in violent personal abuse". The same must be said of an editorial in the *Gyroscope*, a Palo Alto quarterly edited by Yvor Winters, Janet Lewis, and Howard Baker: "We feel it our duty to protest emphatically against a recent

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attack on Mr. Allen Tate in THE BOOKMAN, by Mr. Robert Shafer. Mr. Shafer stepped entirely clear of the philosophical and literary issues involved to indulge in the most injurious of personalities. This is the conduct neither of a humanist, which, with a certain lack of humility, we feel, Mr. Shafer, like a number of other academic gentlemen, professes to be, nor of a gentleman. We feel that Mr. Seward Collins, as editor of THE BOOKMAN, showed little more discretion than did Mr. Shafer and that a public apology is in order from both of them".

I quote these strong editorials, the strongest that reached me, in order to complete the record of a notable controversy, being quite confident that anyone capable of examining fairly all the evidence will side with Mr. Shafer and THE BOOKMAN and feel that any apology should come from Mr. Tate. The protests of his friends, it should be noted, were written before the appearance of Mr. Tate's reply to Mr. Shafer in the March BOOKMAN, a reply in which Mr. Tate carried his shocking methods of debate to the extreme, as Mr. Shafer demonstrated in his accompanying rejoinder. What can be said of an author who revises a crucial passage in an article between editions, and then, with no mention of the alteration, quotes his revised version and makes the central theme of his reply a charge of misrepresentation because his critic followed the plain meaning of the original? Well, the only thing that can be said was said by Mr. Shafer in his original article, particularly in his concluding opinion that Mr. Tate had not yet attained the company of the great in his kind of criticism, but might in time. Mr. Tate obliged by making substantial progress in his very next article.

I do not know whether there were still those who cared to defend Mr. Tate's seriousness, learning, conscience, and so on, after reading his second exhibition. At all events they must have realized that something more than indignant protestations would be needed. And even then the question would be largely academic. After Mr. Shafer's first exposure of Mr. Tate's freedom with the evidence there were many readers who were willing to take into consideration that "the author was travelling", or "he had not his books by him", or "his notes were obscure", or "he was misinformed", or even that he was sorry. But when in his reply Mr. Tate not only side-stepped the demonstrated misrepresentations, but proceeded to misquote himself in a crucial passage in order to discredit his opponent, I am sure that most readers lost any interest in what the explanation might be. Either he knew what he did or he knew not what he did: it matters little which, so far as responsible criticism is concerned.

I share the admiration of his friends for Mr. Tate's brilliant gifts when he is not led into frenzied and disgraceful tactics by tackling something so enormously beyond his powers as knocking Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More and Norman Foerster into cocked hats. I regret as much as his friends that his necessary failure should have been so ignominious. But one would be unfair to one's hopes for Mr. Tate's talents not to inform him emphatically when he misuses them. One would be faithless to still larger obligations not to protest equally emphatically when the bounds of what is tolerable in controversy have been overstepped.

In the meanwhile, behind the scenes, drastic methods of reprisal against the humanist invasion were being plotted. It was feared that the approaching humanist symposium might sweep the country, with horrible results. A symposium in reply was quickly conceived, rumored, planned, announced, under the organizing skill of Mr. C. Hartley Grattan. There was endless scurrying to gather ammunition and marshal the forces. The mails were crowded with letters, the air with telegrams. Conferences were hastily called. Men who had never heard of each other or who had reviewed each other's books with asperity suddenly found themselves intimate friends, spending hours together in restaurants devis-

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ing schemes for the campaign. Enraptured esthetes and dry little rationalists, social revolutionaries and bucolic poets, muck-raking journalists and conscientious novelists, eminent professors and literary tyros, encouraged one another with promises of coöperation against the universal enemy.

The daily press kept up its barrage, with the critics around the country taking their cue from the New York men and adding their voices. The most tireless of the newspaper men was William Soskin, who seldom let a day go by without some anti-humanist sermon or squib. Indeed his exhibition became one of the most extraordinary ever seen on a respectable publication, strikingly incongruous with the *Evening Post's* distinguished career. Before long he had worked himself up to the point where he was not stopping short of scatological references. On off days, when no better opportunities for his gutter-sniping at the humanists offered themselves, he would praise a book, remark that it was a book the humanists would not like—and then attack the humanists for their hypothetical dislike. I quote a sample of his manner of providing *Post* readers with the literary news. The occasion was the appearance of two magazine articles, one by Irving Babbitt, the other a hostile critique of him by Mary Colum. After referring to Professor Babbitt's article Mr. Soskin wrote:

"Original sources do not serve as very dependable guides, however, in a subject so confused and many-voiced as contemporary literary criticism. I think there is a much more sound and artistically intact exposition of humanism in its place in American literature in the February issue of *Scribner's*, written by one of America's keenest critics, Mary Colum." Later Mr. Soskin explained this odd aversion to "original sources" in favor of the most hostile article available, by saying "Mrs. Colum is an excellent writer, while Professor Babbitt is a mediocre one".

And indeed Mrs. Colum's article was occasioning spasms of joy in one large section of the public, and in another bringing up the recurring question, how it is possible for a reputation as a critic to be won in this country by a writer who cannot write three logically consecutive sentences, who parades misinformation on crucial subjects with the authority of omniscience, who abounds in false generalizations and purely private systematizations, who has never contributed an important opinion, a novel idea, a valid distinction, a fresh characterization, or even, in spite of inveterate asperity, an effective slating or a memorable epithet. It should be remembered that the decade of the twenties was a happy period for continuators of the Irish anti-respectable tradition established in this country by Francis Hackett. It enabled them, at one and the same time, to exercise the Britisher's natural desire to patronize America, to mock established institutions, and to appear to be "in the movement". There were two main differences between the leading representatives: first, Ernest Boyd followed the Mencken wing of the movement, while Mrs. Colum trailed after the Brooks-Bourne contingent; and second, Mr. Boyd wrote copiously and so more quickly ran through his period as a critic, whereas Mrs. Colum, taking a tip from J. E. Spingarn, wrote so seldom that at the close of the decade her reputation is at its apogee. The Guggenheim Foundation is performing a distinct service to American letters in eliciting a book from her.

Mrs. Colum's *Scribner* article, "Self-Critical America", was typical of her art. After a preliminary round of absurdities—"the writing of a moderately successful piece of literary criticism requires more variety of literary accomplishment than any other kind of writing"; America being a "new country" has produced "a new form of criticism—social criticism", meaning the criticism of Mencken and Brooks; Count Keyserling is a "really profound observer"; the comic strip artists produce "devastating criticism" (shades of the American dada movement of 1922!), etc.—

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she proceeds to her main thesis. Her method she takes from Van Wyck Brooks: achieving a formula for distributing blame and praise by selecting two vague words, relating them by special interpretations, and then letting one stand for everything she likes and the other for everything she dislikes. She wisely rejects Brooks's pair, "acquisitive" and "possessive"—would anybody try to pump life into them today?—and produces a pair of her own, "instinctive" and "emotional". To give her idiosyncratic use of them an air of justification she quotes part of a dictionary definition of "instinct", and then promptly forgets it. It quickly becomes clear that in her private terminology an instinct is merely any emotion that she doesn't like.

Applying her formula, Mrs. Colum immediately gives everything American and everything respectable a bad name by calling it "instinctive", in contrast to the "strong civilized emotions of European countries". In the American literature of the New England school, instinct was dominated by intelligence; recent literature has worshipped instinct. In both cases there was "lack of emotional power". Puritanism consists of "intelligence and powerful instinct, an intelligence at war with instinct". At its most objectionable (and Mrs. Colum talks about it as though it were always at its most objectionable) Puritanism is "the tortured and twisted triumph of intelligence over gross instincts in naturally sensual men who are too much concerned with salvation and self-preservation". Has she not achieved a handy formula by means of her home-made psychology? We shall see presently how she uses it.

After some paragraphs on the nature of a national literature Mrs. Colum reverts to the subject of classicism and romanticism, protesting as usual at the unworthiness of these "moldering pigeon-holes" to receive her attention, properly belonging as they do only to "the archives of pedagogy". "There has been a determined attempt in recent years, particularly in America," she says, "to work up the ancient controversy between the classicist and the romanticist". Just what is meant by "in recent years" I could not at first imagine, nor why "particularly in America". If she had said "particularly in England" I would have guessed she meant the discussions during the past decade by T. S. Eliot, Middleton Murry, Hugh Fausset, Herbert Read, and many others. If she had said "particularly in France", I would have supposed that she was alluding either to the anti-romantic campaigns which Charles Maurras (with many disciples) and Baron Seillière have been conspicuously waging for more than thirty years, or to the series of passionate discussions aroused by the several "centenaries" of Romanticism in 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1929. But here, again, we shall see in a moment the reason for this disparaging attitude toward the sterile debates of the pedants "particularly in America".

So unhappy has Mrs. Colum become about romanticism and classicism (could it possibly be from discovering by further reading the triteness of her "own" definition quoted earlier?) that she now rather piteously begs that the terms be dropped "by common agreement for a generation". In any case, she reminds us of her dictum that the terms "have no real application in America", amplifying her earlier explanation by linking "meagre experience" with her present thesis: we have had only instincts, not emotions. Why, Americans have been so unimaginative that they have even thought of love largely in terms of "serene domestic affection". They are Puritans, "and this has to be said against all forms of Puritanism . . . it gives people a suspicion of all emotions except such as can be used to advantage in family life". (You will pardon Mrs. Colum, I am sure, for using "emotions" as though the Puritans had any; but "instincts" would have sounded so awkward there). I hope our critic will soon tell us in detail the cure for this regrettable and provincial fondness for domesticity, so

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that America may at last grow up and produce literature that will at least be either classical or romantic, whatever its other merits may be . . . I hope she will also explain the sharp difference between instinct, on the one hand, and the desire and emotion that in her definition characterize romanticism. I am sure that she *can* explain it; I am sure that she can explain anything.

But now at last we see what the talk about instinctive-emotional, about the classifications of pedants, and about the "American" fondness for family life, is leading up to. Puritanism, "even in its old New England form of reason and intelligence at war with instinct . . . is still in a powerfully influential position. It has even taken refuge in a sort of philosophic system which its inventors and disciples call Humanism". Babbitt is singled out for special attention. He was doubtless delighted to hear that he had been promoted by Mrs. Colum: his "disorderly mind" has now become his "powerful analytical mind". But his use of his powerful analytical mind is deplorable: he actually thinks that classicism is a higher form of art than romanticism, and that the modern attempt to make the romantic virtues take the place of the classic virtues is a symptom, and in its turn a cause, of grave and far-reaching confusions. Here, of course, I am not quoting Mrs. Colum. In her view Babbitt is merely obsessed by that hobgoblin of all Puritans, instinct, which "for him is always in a position of terrific power; he hunts for it everywhere, and hounds it down wherever he can find it".

And, typical pedant that he is, he puts this *bête noire* of his into a pedagogical box: "generally speaking, he equates Romanticism and instinct"; when really, as we have learned from Mrs. Colum, these are "two qualities that are at enmity with each other"; for the simple reason that, as everyone knows (or will know as soon as the Colum school of psychology and esthetics has revolutionized these two subjects), instinctive people lack emotions, and "Romanticism presupposes a high state of emotional development". Mrs. Colum seems a little uncertain in the application of her instinctive-emotional formula. Part of the time Babbitt is "launching his thunderbolts against instinct", and "hounding" it, in the manner required by her definition of Puritanism. At other moments he appears to be himself dominated by instinct like the "loose unbridled" novelists of the modern anti-Puritans: she calls him "a dangerous instinctivist", and speaks of "the extraordinary sway instinct has over his mind". But as she has made both of these ruling American traits thoroughly unattractive, there is no reason—apart from the irrelevant one of consistency—why she should limit herself to one of them in achieving her main aim of disparaging Babbitt.

You might think that an elaborate psychological analysis of the American character, including the invention of several new terms, would suffice as a method of disqualifying Babbitt as a critic in one short essay. But before she was through Mrs. Colum had evolved another. It consisted of saying that he has the "philosophic" mind and not the "literary": "let us not delude ourselves with the idea that he is a literary critic". She explains the difference by saying that one seeks to *explain* life and the other to *reveal* it. This sounds all right, until she begins to use it. "When the urge to explain life and the ends of life is greater than the urge to reveal it, the writer is not engaged in the production of literature—he is engaged in something else, either philosophy, or theology, or science". She conveniently neglects, you see, to add "or criticism", as the sense demands; for her purpose is to prove that Babbitt has nothing to do with literature.

No less striking is the incongruity of her new formula with the great literary value she had put on criticism at the beginning of her article, when she wanted to salute Mencken and Brooks. When Mencken and Brooks write their social, moral, and philosophic views, their criticism has "high literary

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value"; when Babbitt presents his social, moral, and philosophic views, he is "confusing the aim of literature and the aim of philosophy", which makes him "a dangerous and arid influence" in literary criticism. And of course it is not only Babbitt who is disqualified as a literary critic by this odd way with terms. At the forefront of her article Mrs. Colum had boldly listed the "great dead critics": Aristotle, Boileau, Lessing, Herder, Taine, Sainte-Beuve, Matthew Arnold. Now one must turn back and shift them out of criticism over among the philosophers, theologians, scientists, and other mere "explainers" . . . The utter confusion in which all these terms lie in Mrs. Colum's mind can be clearly seen by reading in succession two sentences which occur in adjoining paragraphs, if it is remembered that she defines philosophy as an explanation of life and the ends of life. "All great writers have the philosophic mind, and all great writing has behind it a warp and woof of philosophy"—and—"Seeing into life profoundly enough and sympathetically enough to be able to make literature is far more likely to incapacitate a writer for explaining life or 'the ends of life', than to add to his capacity for explaining them".

Most of Mrs. Colum's talk about Babbitt consists of sweeping statements unsupported by evidence or direct reference. But in the article under discussion she produces two quotations by way of evidence—two quotations which when lifted out of their context, and taken literally, and set among contemptuous chatter on unrelated subjects, can of course be put in an unfavorable light—provided one is careful to suppress entirely the serious train of argument of which they form a part. These conditions suited Mrs. Colum's critical methods admirably. In the course of a profound discussion of the religion of India, Babbitt refers to Tagore and the esthetic romanticism which might be presumed in him from the fact that he is greatly admired by W. B. Yeats. Mrs. Colum bridles at this, quotes the sentence alone, drags in an irrelevant reference to Yeats's admiration for Sophocles, and is moved to proclaim that in addition to "the worst faults of the old pedantic schools of criticism" and "aesthetic callousness", "Professor Babbitt has a fault as a critic which has never appeared in criticism before—he is a dangerous instinctivist". Is it not a quaint form of criticism which devises a new terminology of condemnation, fits a writer to it, and then accuses him of inventing a "new fault"?

Mrs. Colum's other quotation takes us back to her peculiar literary dogma about the ruinous effects of mowing the lawn and preferring one woman to other women. Professor Babbitt had attempted to enliven an analysis of Keats, and in particular Keats's specious identification of truth and beauty, with a humorous reference to Helen of Troy, as being "beautiful, but neither good nor true". The joke, to be sure, was not in Babbitt's best manner. I remember putting a mark of distress in the margin on first reading it. But it forms a most casual detail in the midst of a series of subtle distinctions. Mrs. Colum pounces on it, quotes it alone, and pronounces it "a judgment on Keats which in pure confused Philistinism could hardly be beaten by his namesake, Mr. Babbitt of Main Street, Zenith". Furthermore, she can only see in an allusion to Helen which does not treat her as a moral paragon, an illustration of stern, sex-obsessed Puritanism, presumably "the tortured and twisted triumph of intelligence over gross instincts in naturally sensual men" which she finds in Puritanism. "It is characteristic of Professor Babbitt", she says, "that beauty to him is the beauty of woman, and characteristic in turn, that goodness in women is limited to the business of domestic relations". In pure confused Bohemianism this could hardly be beaten by the whole corps of American critics working in unison.

(The third and concluding part of "Criticism in America" will appear next month.)

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NARRAGANSETT PIER

by Vincent McHugh

"Come along," said his mother. "Don't stand there gaping."

But the small boy had been stuck to the shop window like a fly. He heard his mother; and he would not have considered disobeying had he considered at all. It was his pride that she could depend on him. At the impatience of her voice prompt nerves tugged at his muscles; but the heart in his body was attached to the blue pail with the rolled brass lip, its blue spade creased for the handle, in the shop of the Japanese importer on the boardwalk. The glass chimes painted with delightful ideographs made a sweet jangling; and over all other noises the sea poured a long sluicing noise on the sand, over and over, a sound like the feeling of sleep.

His mother said sharply: "Come along! If you think it will do you any good to—". She knew that he wanted something; and he was aware that it would be hopeless to ask for it, even to beg. As she came back along the boardwalk, she took his arm, as if to—. But she would consent, impatient, to listen. He gazed up at her with a grave muted request. "Well? What is it?" She looked as if she would attend no answer. "You always want something, and you know we can't— What *is* it?" He pointed mutely at the blue pail.

"Haven't I told you not to point?" He listened, meek and warm, while she corrected him, confident that she too felt warm for him. And before he knew it he was inside the shop; and the Japanese was bowing and putting rays of creases into his tight smile; and his mother had opened her bag and felt in it with a white silk glove while his heart beat, beat, and the fireworks' smell excited him, and the great porcelain jars on the shelves. . .

"How much is it?" His mother's voice dwindled. His heart had stopped. The sky, which had been gray and curly as a sheep's back, crouched and darkled. The dragons on the jars were foreign and freezing, and the man with the blue pail might cut him in pieces, and the chime of bells became a rasp, because he had seen two Japanese boys worm out from behind the counter, look at him a second with sliding eyes, and run out at the back door. They did not speak. He had never heard them make any sound but a slight twinging noise like the voices of the blackbirds in his grandmother's cherry-tree at home, gobbling the fruit. His grandmother would help him; but she was far off. It came over him with a thrill that his mother was there. She loomed warm and deep. Thanksgiving poured silent out to her.

So that he took the pail she had bought him, even forgetting what to say; and went out behind her to the boardwalk again; and walked beside her with no words, but his hand close in her hand. Her mouth was an impatient purse. He felt that she was tired. "What's the matter with you?" she said.

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"Now I've bought it for you, you don't care anything about it. I declare I can't—" The sea crawled so slowly, and looked so cold and gray, and the gull turned over on his wing and cried so purely that the small boy gulped. His mother shook his hand sharply and dropped it. "I don't see how a person could have any patience with you," she said. "Run along and undress. Here—take the key. It's nearly four. Your father—"

He felt that he must babble out to her how much he was afraid of the boys with sliding eyes; and how they had come at him in the dark; and how he woke and prayed, thinking of the Child Jesus behind the little bronze doors in St. Swithin's at home. But she would not listen; she would tell him that he was a little coward. The body of that word burned in his mind. He stumbled away. He did not wish to swim now; but he must.

Inside the bath-house he smelled paint and salt water and fresh water, and sat for a moment adoring the blue pail, until he remembered that he must hurry and dutifully got into the white wool suit. His feet padded hard as he ran. The pail jangled. The boards were moist and cool inside, but dry and cool on the promenade.

"Go and swim," said his mother. She hardly looked at him. He stood a moment, attentive and neglected, then ran down the beach. He set his pail down as if it might break if he dropped it. The first bubbles were cold. A wash drew in and out over the clear sand. He thought of his father and wished that he were there. He faced the cold sea alone. A little girl down the beach only dabbled her toes, with tiny squeals. He was scornful. He ran out to meet the next wave, shutting his eyes when it struck and thrashing up out of burial to swim wildly out. He was over his head. He must be over his head. His mother would see him. She would know that he was not a coward.

The next sweep lifted him like a straw and buried him ten yards back. He got up gasping and began to thrash out again. He forgot the blue pail and his mother and the boys with sliding eyes; he had thought only for his enormous antagonist. He stood up. Behind the roar of the water his own name was called; and turning, he saw his mother's long silk glove beckon him.

He went up the beach and sat down. The sand he packed into his pail was cold and heavy. He filled it to the shining brim and buried it, heaping up the sand all around. The pat of his fingers left small ridges like gullies in a hill. He stopped shivering. Now and then, as he worked, he cast little glances over his shoulder toward the dark spaces under the pavilion, a grove of piles where the Japanese boys often hid. Once he imagined he caught sight of a bare yellow face behind a pier. He looked away quickly and became absorbed in his work again.

He stood up without a word and went toward her when his mother called him. She said: "Your father will be back soon". She hardly glanced at him. Dutifully he took his shower; and in the bath-house he got into his linen blouse with the blue sailor collar. Where was the blue pail? His head whirled. What if— The darkness of his cot at night came over him, sick; and the faces of boys with sliding eyes came and went in that oppression.

He pattered out to the boardwalk. His mother was looking toward the Casino. She would not see him. He hurried down the beach, getting his patent leathers full of sand. There was a smooth deep hole in the sand where his pail had been. Under the gloom of the pavilion the Japanese boys were filling it with mussel shells and smooth white pebbles. The large one glanced around at him but did not speak.

The small boy took his heart in his hand and began to walk stiffly toward them. He must; if he did not his mother would call him a little coward. The larger of the Japanese sat back on his heels and watched him approach. The other went on putting pebbles and shells into the blue pail. It was

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dark under the pavilion. Now the other one stopped and looked at him. Their eyes shone. They did not say a word. One of them was dressed in overalls and the other had on a bathing suit too large for him. His yellow ribs glistened.

The small boy marched up to them with ice at his heart. If he did not keep his legs stiff they would make him turn tail and run. The sliding eyes watched him in the gloom. "Give me that," he said, lordly. "That's mine." He snatched it up from between them, turned his back and began to march away. The skin of his neck crawled.

They set upon him with a silent lightning rapacity that plumped the breath out of his body. The larger Japanese twisted his head into the sand and sat on it. The other jumped on his back with hands and feet going. He tried to gasp and could not. He felt that he had died. The pail rattled out of his hand. The larger one snatched it and made off quickly. The small boy got hold of the other's foot. The foot dragged him a yard or two, kicked him in the face, and left him. He got up slowly with the agony of lost breath. He could not cry out. He got up and stumbled. He must get out of the dark. Mother, Father, the Infant Jesus behind the bronze grille in St. Swithin's! He stumbled toward the sound of the sea, padded up the steps and stood before his mother, gasping.

His father had come back. He had a letter in his hand. The small boy heard his father say: "No. He wouldn't give an opinion. He *thinks* Correggio". His mother's voice, bitter and weary, said: "Oh, I thought that was the way it—" But the small boy cried out: "Mother! Mother! The Japanese boys—they took my pail—and I took it back—and they got it again!" The oils of devotion would pour over his wounds. He had suffered in obedience to her. He stood before her with the blue collar torn.

But she only turned to his father. "Edward!" she said. "And I bought him that pail not two hours ago!" She said to the small boy impatiently: "Oh, come along". Over all other noises the sea poured a long sluicing noise on the sand, over and over, a sound like the feeling of sorrow. A gull turned over on his wing and cried purely.

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ROBERT FROST AND THE HUMANISTIC TEMPER

by Gorham B. Munson

IN A DAY when most of the poetic rivulets run toward the east to empty into the great ocean of Romanticism, the poetic stream of Robert Frost runs west. That was what I meant when I declared in my biography of this poet that "The purest classical poet of America today is Robert Frost". But at that time he had not supplied the symbols I am now using for my contention. His last volume, *West-Running Brook* (1928), had not appeared with these lines in the title poem:

"What does it think it's doing running west
When all the other country brooks flow east
To reach the ocean? It must be the brook
Can trust itself to go by contraries. . . ."

Let us see, basing our examination entirely on Mr. Frost's latest work, just what it means, this sense he has of moving in a direction opposite to the main currents of his age.

There is more humor glinting about the surface in *West-Running Brook* than in the earlier volumes, where often enough indeed the lines were made sunny by humorous perceptions. But *West-Running Brook* makes inescapable the fact that Mr. Frost is the most humorous of all our living poets. Others may be witty, sardonic, satirical: he stands apart unrivalled by his American contemporaries for sweet, sanative humor. To me our four best poets today are Robinson Jeffers, Hart Crane, T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost; one sees at once Mr. Frost's difference from the others in possessing what they have not: a sense of humor appropriate for poetry. Now this is evidence of something, and Mr. Herbert Read has very well expressed what it signifies.

"All real humorists," he says, "are classicists, because it is in the nature of a classicist to see things finite, and see things infinite, but not to confuse these two categories. The classicist, like the humorist, acknowledges the 'hollowness and farce of the world, and its disproportion to the godlike within us'—and this is Coleridge's definition of humor. It might just as well be a definition of classicism. The romantic, on the other hand, merges all things into the infinite, sees all men as gods, or, at the other extreme, sees nothing but the unrelated trivialities of existence—the jumble, the glitter, the breathless jollity of it all."

That is a pregnant paragraph. It means that the first sign of the classical—which in our time is the humanistic—temper is a love of distinctions. I shall quote a delightful trifle by Mr. Frost which shows the lover of distinctions at sport. He calls it "The Rose Family":

The rose is a rose,
And was always a rose.
But the theory now goes
That the apple's a rose,
And the pear is, and so's
The plum, I suppose.
The dear only knows
What will next prove a rose.
You, of course, are a rose—
But were always a rose.

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Well, this disposition not to make too much of partial likenesses, of minor degrees of correspondence, of an obscure principle of continuity in things, not to make mergers by washing out distinctions, not to call apples and pears and plums, roses—this, I say, is the first sign of the humanistic temper. For by temperament the humanist wishes a clear-cut, not a blurry, world. By virtue of that wish and the clarity of his distinctions, he is able to draw a line, delicate yet firm, between Man and Nature, and this line for us has been beautifully traced again by Mr. Frost. I am thinking of his poem about the tree by his bedroom window whose leafy head was concerned with outer weather while the sleeper's head was so much concerned with inner weather: a line comes to me, "And bring back Nature in people's place". And that is just it! Mr. Frost never loses his understanding of "people's place" in the life of Nature, nor does he, by the pathetic fallacy or otherwise, confuse inner psychological weather with outer weather. He has always, in the famous phrase of Renaissance Humanism, a sense of "the dignity of man" maintaining itself in spite of Nature's inroads. Read "Sand Dunes" and hear the quiet challenge to Nature of the third and fourth stanzas:

Sea waves are green and wet,
But up from where they die,
Rise others vaster yet,
And those are brown and dry.

They are the sea made land
To come at the fisher town,
And bury in solid sand
The men she could not drown.

She may know cove and cape,
But she does not know mankind
If by any change of shape,
She hopes to cut off mind.

Men left her a ship to sink:
They can leave her a hut as well;
And be but more free to think
For the one more cast off shell.

Now just as Mr. Frost feels man to be, by virtue of his reason, something more than Nature, he also feels him to be less than God, something other, too, than a drop of divinity. His famous line, "Something must be left to God", which occured in an earlier book, expresses his attitude perfectly, an attitude that pervades such poems in *West-Running Brook* as "Bereft" and "Once by the Pacific". It is an attitude of respect toward the inscrutable in the cosmos, and this poet stops with respect. Respect for Nature for what She is, respect for God for whatever He is—and in the wide region between Nature and God respect for Man who fills it: that is the attitude of the poet we are considering. It is the feelings of that middle region, the typically human feelings of man, that fill him with lyrical excitement. "Canis Major" is an excellent illustration of verses sprung playfully from this mid-region. You can easily imagine how a romantic poet would have treated the theme, how he would have swelled in the manner of Victor Hugo and declaimed all over God's heaven, or as easily you can imagine a religious treatment culminating in some sentiment of worship. But note how exquisitely Mr. Frost remains, in spite of his exaltation, definitely a man on this little planet, Earth, knowing his joy but not losing sight of his place and his consequence. He does not abase or debase himself; he refrains from the theatrical; he has no touch of the mystical:

The great Overdog,
That heavenly beast
With a star in one eye,
Gives a leap in the east.

He dances upright
All the way to the west
And never once drops
On his forefeet to rest.

I'm a poor underdog,
But tonight I will bark
With the great Overdog
That roams through the dark.

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Here I should perhaps say that I am as well aware as anyone of the danger of reading a doctrine into poetry or extracting one from poetry. To go to Mr. Frost's work looking for humanist principles is stupid, but to return from that work with a clear apprehension of the man, his attitudes, his characteristic emotions, his temper, is to have read to some advantage. In writing about Mr. Frost I am keeping my eye on poetic facts which consist of *feelings* in the first place, and I have said that the feelings that inspire him to utterance in verse happen to be humanistic in character. I do *not* mean that he is a deliberate thinker along humanistic lines: I doubt if he has ever read Mr. More or Mr. Babbitt at all. But he has deeply read his Virgil and his Emerson: his self-education has unconsciously proceeded along humanistic paths: by temperament he is conservative. There is, as revealed in his verse, a certain habitual disposition of mind, and that disposition of mind when the reader apprehends it he can quite correctly call the humanistic temper. Not by theory but by practice as a poet is Mr. Frost truly a contemporary humanist.

To illustrate: Mr. Babbitt says that the difference is marked "between the man who is moving towards poise and the man who is moving away from it. Since the break with the somewhat artificial decorum of the eighteenth century most men have been moving away from it". That is an idea: that is prose. Mr. Babbitt believes that poise is a peculiarly human virtue, and that most of us have not attained or maintained that virtue. Now come into the world of verse where men think with their senses and their emotions. What is Mr. Frost's "The Armful" but an assertion, in the symbolic terms verse loves, that man *as man* is engaged in the difficult feat of preserving a balance, of trying ever new arrangements for coping with the unmanageable burdens of circumstance? Poise to Mr. Babbitt in the instance cited is an idea: to Mr. Frost it comes as a picture, an emotion, an intuition, that man is most man when he achieves poise—

For every parcel I stoop down to seize,
I lose some other off my arms and knees,
And the whole pile is slipping, bottles, buns,
Extremes too hard to comprehend at once,
Yet nothing I should care to leave behind.
With all I have to hold with, hand and mind
And heart, if need be, I will do my best
To keep their building balanced at my breast.
I crouch down to prevent them as they fall;
Then sit down in the middle of them all.
I had to drop the armful in the road
And try to stack them in a better load.

In this essay I have shown Robert Frost as a humorous lover of distinctions and as an upholder of the dignity of man. But what is his basic conviction about man? We shall find that movingly expressed in "West-Running Brook", the title poem from which I quoted at the beginning. What I have to say about this poem, I find, is in substantial agreement with Mr. G. R. Elliott's remarks on it in *The Cycle of Modern Poetry*. A man and his wife come upon the brook that runs west instead of east like the other country brooks. The wife points out a stationary white wave that seems to be signalling to the onlookers. It is caused by the black stream catching on a sunken rock and being flung backward on itself in a white wave:

And the white water rode the black forever,
Not gaining but not losing, like a bird
White feathers from the struggle of whose breast
Flecked the dark stream and flecked the darker pool
Below the point, and were at last driven wrinkled
In a white scarf against the far shore alders.

And now for the meaning attached to the symbols. The man reflects:

"Speaking of contraries, see how the brook
In that white wave runs counter to itself.
It is from that in water we were from
Long, long before we were from any creature.

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Here we, in our impatience of the steps,
Get back to the beginning of beginnings,
The stream of everything that runs away.
Some say existence like a Pirouot
And Pirouette, forever in one place,
Stands still and dances, but it runs away,
It seriously, sadly, runs away
To fill the abyss' void with emptiness.
It flows beside us in this water brook,
But it flows over us. It flows between us
To separate us for a panic moment.
It flows between us, over us, and *with* us.
And it is time, strength, tone, light, life and
love—
And even substance lapsing unsubstantial;
The universal cataract of death
That spends to nothingness—and unresisted,
Save by some strange resistance in itself,
Not just a swerving, but a throwing back,
As if regret were in it and were sacred.
It has this throwing backward on itself
So that the fall of most of it is always
Raising a little, sending up a little.
Our life runs down in sending up the clock.
The brook runs down in sending up our life.
The sun runs down in sending up the brook.
And there is something sending up the sun.
It is this backward motion toward the source,
Against the stream, that most we see ourselves
in,
The tribute of the current to the source.
It is from this in nature we are from.
It is most us."

There, I say, we have revealed the basic conviction of Mr. Frost about man, and those who are apt in the reading of ideas as well as apt in reading verse will see that the poet's sense of contraries is not far from the humanist's declaration that in man there is a duality of consciousness, a struggle between his impulse to unify himself and his impulse to drift with the stream of life. It will be a great loss to poetry should the springs of inspiration that well up in men like Mr. Frost permanently run dry when the "contraries" in man are realized. For our inclinations flow one way: our manliness is a backward movement upon them. And poetry can be a stirring music arising from the struggle of contraries.

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ROADSIDE MEETINGS OF A LITERARY NOMAD

IX. BRET HARTE WITH A MONOCLE—HENRY JAMES, LOVER OF AMERICA

by Hamlin Garland

It was with something of a shock that I heard Howells admit his lack of contact with English men of letters. That I should know only four or five was natural, for I was an obscure young author; but Howells was one of the best known novelists of his day. "I do not know England well," he said. "I have only made short stops there on my way to the Continent."

In this remark lies a hint of the situation in 1899: comparatively little literary and esthetic intercourse existed between London and New York. In all matters of art we looked to Paris, and for music and our musical judgments to Germany. Furthermore, many of our writers still retained a feeling of resentment toward England. London patronized them as provincials. Conditions had changed since Lowell's essay on Old World condescension, as he himself as ambassador had learned; but some part of that patronization still lingered in the minds of book reviewers, and the English public welcomed American eccentricity as displayed in Mark Twain. To such Americans as they found amusing, they were hospitable. Very naturally and logically they wished the writers of America to be original. They were interested in Miller and Harte and Clemens for the reason that they had the tang of the Far-West in their writings, and we as writers felt the need of Old World endorsement although we loudly proclaimed our intellectual independence. Our musicians still sought the approval of German masters, and our painters and sculptors still sought a place on the walls of the spring salon in Paris, just as our dramatists schemed for a London production of their plays and our actors dreamed of a season on the Strand—not for the money to be drawn from London, but in order to strengthen their position at home.

All this, as we look back upon it from the year 1930 and across the changes following a world-shaking war, seems logical. As a grown-up nation we can admit our timid years. We *were* provincial so far as England was concerned—or if this word seems too blunt, we may call ourselves literary pioneers or esthetic squatters on new land. The longer I stayed in London the more clearly I perceived this relationship, just as in going from Dakota to Boston I came to an understanding of the patronizing attitude of Eastern critics toward Western writers, an attitude almost equally expressed in their over-cordial applause and in their captious criticism. There is no escape from this relationship; so long as history and scholarship centers in cities, so long will the mother country be more authoritative than the colony. The weight of history, the wealth of tradition must ever be on the other side of the water.

To make the case concrete, as I had sought the good opinion of Boston and New York critics so now I hoped for a favoring judg-

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ment by English men of letters. Here was I, a son of Wisconsin, with only a few dollars in my pocket, wandering about London as Emerson and Burroughs and Miller had done, knowing only five or six writers, acknowledging my feebleness, yet resenting any act of patronization. It is rather remarkable that the men with whom I was most at home had in them the seeds of long life. They are still the recognized masters of their arts after more than thirty years.

Howells had given me a note to Thomas Hardy, one to Bret Harte and an especially valuable one to Mark Twain. "I don't know where Clemens is at this moment and I cannot tell you where to find Harte, but if they are in London I am sure they will be glad to see you."

I had a special reason for seeing Clemens, for his firm had published General Grant's *Memoirs* and I wished to clear up certain points concerning this important transaction. *McClure's Magazine* had commissioned me to secure an interview if possible. Harte had long been one of my high admirations. I regarded him as a leader (in point of power as well as of time) in the local-color school of fiction, which I was advocating as the most vital development of our literature. "Harte came East like a conquering prince in 1871," said Howells, "and was for six or eight years the friend of Lowell and Longfellow. For a time he was acclaimed in England."

No one in London, however, could tell me anything very definite about Harte. He was not seen where Americans ate and drank and the gossip about him was not reassuring. And Clemens, so my publishers told me, was in Austria. The only one of Howells's notes which I was able to present was the one to Thomas Hardy, whom I found living in a small apartment in Kensington. At his invitation I had tea with him one afternoon.

He was in his late prime at this time and made a powerful impression on me. He was small and blond, with a fine head. His full beard was brown, and he appeared more like a studious country doctor than a novelist. He reminded me of John Burroughs as we talked. He was of much the same quiet type and his wife was equally plain. They were both essentially country folk.

He told me that his life was almost entirely rural. "My house is outside Dorchester which is only a little city. I am a justice of the peace," he said, with a faint smile. "I am hardly ever in London. I came up this time on my wife's account."

His lack of humor, his blunt plain speech, his scientific outlook on the world reminded me of Burroughs. There was nothing egotistical or austere in his manner. His clothing was about like that which Burroughs wore when he came to town.

He spoke of America rather wistfully. "I'd like to see it," he said. "I have a great many readers there and feel very friendly toward them, but I fear I shall never see them."

He spoke of his home in Dorchester. "It is not on the sea. I never go to the sea even in the summer. I don't like it. It's too cruel. I prefer the moors. In olden times the people in these sea-towns built the backs of their houses toward the water. They took no pleasure in looking out to sea. Neither do I."

LXXIV

One afternoon as Zangwill and I were having tea at Joseph Hatton's house, my attention was drawn to a man whose appearance was almost precisely that of the typical English club man of the American stage. He was tall, and his hair, parted in the middle, was white. He wore gray striped trousers, a cutaway coat over a fancy vest, and above his polished shoes glowed lavender spats. In his hand he carried a pair of yellow gloves.

"Who is that?" I asked of Zangwill.

"Don't you know who that is?" he asked. "That is your noble compatriot, Francis Bret Harte."

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"Bret Harte!" I stared at him in amazement. Could that dandy, that be-monocled, be-spatted old beau be the author of "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Men of Sandy Bar"? As I stared, I recalled Joaquin Miller in his little cottage high on the hills above Oakland, and marvelled at the change which the years had wrought in his expatriate fellow. I said to Zangwill, "I have a letter to Harte from Howells. Present me". Zangwill led me over to him and introduced me as an American writer with a note from Howells. Harte was politely interested. "Come and see me on Thursday," he said, and gave me his address.

Although courteous, his manner was not winning and I hesitated about making the call. However it was easier to go than to excuse myself, and on the afternoon he had named I found my way to his "bachelor apartments" in Lancaster Gate. These seemed to me very ladylike, spic and span and very dainty in coloring, with chairs of the gilded, spindle-legged, perilous sort which women adore; and when Harte came in to greet me he was almost as aristocratic as the room. He was wearing the same suit with the same fancy vest, but with a different tie, and from his vest dangled an English eye-glass. His appearance was that of an elderly fop whose life had been one of self-indulgent ease.

Taking the letter which I handed him he asked me to be seated and read its two short pages in silence. Then raising his glance he dropped his monocle and his English accent at the same time, and said, "Tell me about Howells. Tell me of Tom Aldrich and all the rest of the boys".

My heart warmed to him. He was wholly the American. His voice and his words were not even Bostonian—they were Californian. Howells's words and something in my voice had not only awakened youthful memories but had strengthened a secret desire. His eyes, as I talked, became dreamy and his voice wistful, and at last I said, "When are we to see you again?"

"Never again, I fear. I *can't* go back now."

"You would have a splendid reception in California," I urged.

"I'm not so sure of that," he replied, a note of sadness in his voice. "I couldn't find *my* California. *My* California is gone. My friends are gone. The men who represented California to me are gone. No, I shall never go back. Sometimes I wish I had never come away."

Twice I rose to go but at his request resumed my seat. "I want to hear more about the West," he said. "I seldom meet anybody who knows America." It seemed that I brought something precious, something which suggested to him the charm of his triumphant youth. After all Miller had chosen the better part.

At last I took my leave. Harte opened the door for me and still talking followed me down the steps to the sidewalk, and there questioned me concerning Alden and Stedman and Warner, his youthful companions and friends. Finally, for the third time I clasped his hand and said good-bye. On nearing the corner I was moved to turn and glance backward. He was standing on the doorstep, his hand on the railing, the sunlight on his bent head making his white hair gleam like silver. Such is the picture of Bret Harte as I knew him and as I saw him last. He died a few years later, an exile, almost forgotten by his native land.

LXXV

Soon after my meeting with Harte I learned that Mark Twain had returned to London, and I hastened to write him: "There are several points in the *Life of General Grant* upon which I would like to have your comment".

He replied by inviting me to call at his hotel.

Up to this time I had never met him, although I knew a great deal of him through Howells and had heard him speak several

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times. He had been living in Europe for four or five years and had been highly successful both as writer and lecturer. According to report, kings and queens had been quick to do him honor. He was considered to be the largest and most significant figure in American literature. His fame was no longer based upon his eccentricities, but on the rugged force and New World flavor of everything he said and wrote. I was keenly eager to see him and talk with him.

As I came upon him in a small but exclusive hotel in the West End I was shocked by the changes which had come to him. His shaggy hair was white and a stoop had come to his shoulders. It appeared that in growing old he had diminished. He seemed smaller than I had remembered him on the platform but his fine head and rough-hewn features were even more impressive than before.

He had heard of my book on Grant, probably through Brander Matthews, but I think he would have been courteous without either of these aids. After putting his small hand in mine he motioned me to a chair and began to speak in the rhythmic drone which had been so large a factor in his success as an after-dinner speaker. It was made up of peculiar stresses difficult to describe and was interrupted here and there by a sudden pause —corresponding to a dash in print—a most dramatic device, as when he wrote, "Be good —and you'll be lonesome". These, and a curious aloofness of glance (as though he spoke through a mask) made it difficult for me to take his serious statements at their full value. Most people expected him to be funny, a fact which he was accustomed to curse regretfully. As he talked to me he appeared to forget me. He looked over my head as at some far-off landscape. His eyes, hidden by his bushy eyebrows, were half closed and I saw them only occasionally. I was surprised to find them blue and keen.

I asked him if he had any objection to telling me how he came to publish the Grant *Memoirs*. He replied, "None at all, but before you print it you'll have to get Mrs. Clemens's consent".

LXXVI

His story was something like this:

"One night as I was a-comin' away from the theatre, I chanced to hear one man say to another, 'Do you know that General Grant is about to publish his memoirs?' And the other said, 'No; who is the publisher?' That was enough for me. I went the very next day to see the General. I found him in his library with his son, Colonel Fred. 'General,' I began, 'is it true that you are about to publish your memoirs?' 'It is,' he replied. 'I am at this moment considering an offer for the manuscript.' 'General,' I said, 'that interests me. Would you mind telling me exactly what that offer is?' 'Not at all,' he replied. 'The Century Company is willing to assume all the expenses and risk and pay me ten percent on all copies sold.' 'Good God, General,' I exclaimed, 'you are *giving* them the book! You should have three times that amount.' You know how modest the old General was. Well, he showed that phase of his character here. 'Oh no,' he answered, 'you are mistaken. I think they are treating me very handsomely. My book will not sell largely.'

"'*You* are the one mistaken, General,' I retorted. 'The book will sell largely, and just to show you how I feel about it, I will offer you twenty-five percent royalty, and draw you a check for fifty thousand dollars advance royalty right *now*.' This staggered the old soldier but he shook his head. 'That's very fine of you, Mr. Clemens, but I can't accept it. I am committed to these other men.' At this point Colonel Fred put in his oar. 'Why no, you're not, Father. You're only *considering* their offer. You're under no obligation to them. You have a perfect right to lay Mr. Clemens's proposition over against theirs.'

"In the end I convinced the General that I was a publisher and not a philanthropist,

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and I got the book. I published it. It sold enormously, as you know—more than half a million copies—and I had the high satisfaction of visiting the old Commander on his death-bed at Mt. McGregor, when he could no longer utter a word or lift a hand, and of saying to him, 'General, there is in the bank in New York City—subject to your order or the order of Mrs. Grant—the sum of three hundred thousand dollars, and there'll be more—much more.'"

As he ended on this note of reminiscent emotion, my heart glowed with a realization of what that message must have meant to the great soldier whose later days had been so quietly heroic, and so filled with mental and physical pain.

With this matter cleared away, Clemens fell into talk of his failure as a publisher. "I am going home soon—as soon as I have made a little more money. I am nearly clear of those obligations I assumed as a partner in Webster & Company." This brought up the subject of his arrangement with his creditors and he cursed with heartfelt fervor and oriental magnificence Charles Webster, "who chouselled me out of fifty thousand dollars thus bringing about the ruin of my publishing house". With cold malignity he then said, in a level monotone, "For many years I have been writing a kind of diary in which I have set down from time to time exactly what I think of the men and women I have met. It can't be published while *I* am alive. It can't be published while *Mrs. Clemens* is alive. It can't be published while *any of the people mentioned* are alive; but when it *is* published, that blankety-blank-blank will turn in his grave!"

He ended with such deadly hatred in face and voice that I was able to share in some degree the disgrace he had been called upon to bear and the burden he had voluntarily assumed. In my note-book that night I outlined this conversation, and added: "He has accomplished a tremendous task—a really great soul".

As I was going away I again said: "*McClure's Magazine* wants to print this story. Shall I send it to them?"

"Certainly. Go ahead! But they'll have to get Mrs. Clemens's O.K. on the proof."

The most curious sequel to this whole interview (which, by the way, Mrs. Clemens would not let us publish) is the fact that Webster, whom Clemens accused of "chouselling" him out of fifty thousand dollars, was not in any way connected with the business at that time. He had been ill and out of the firm for several years. The failure of the firm was due to Mark's own unwise investments in a type-setting machine. Albert Bigelow Paine, his biographer, told me this some ten years after this meeting, and added, "When I had convinced Clemens of his error he sat for a few moments in silence, then remarked in a musing tone, 'Albert, there was a time when my memory was reliable. There was a time when I could remember a great many things that were so and some that were *not* so—now I remember only the latter'".

LXXVII

All through the early years of my stay in Boston, the critics and reviewers invariably alluded to "Howells and James" as if they were some sort of firm, or certainly literary twins. Usually they were thus named in a tone of resentment, as if representing a school of fiction unjustly in the ascendant. For no reason at all I had begun by sharing this resentment, but after I had read *The Minister's Charge* and *The Bostonians*, I developed sincere admiration for James and a deep affection for Howells.

It amused me then to wonder why they were thus bracketed, for they were not in the least similar except in the broad sense of being students of manners rather than writers of romance. James was even then rather difficult to read, whereas Howells's pages were as limpid and flexible in flow as a brook. James concerned himself with stories of ex-

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traordinarily intellectual character, people of the upper class, men and women whose stories hinged on some psychologic subtlety; Howells dealt with those of ordinary life, editors, business men, ministers, lawyers, reporting and analyzing their doings with such humor and insight that they became exponents of New England social history. Nevertheless, people persisted in naming him and James in one breath as being engaged in a combined assault on something which should be revered, not destroyed.

Howells often talked of James to me, quoting some of his opinions with approval and speaking of his books with delight. "We are friends of long standing," he said, "and when next he comes to New York I shall contrive to have you meet him."

The opportunity did not occur during my life in Boston, and James remained a remote and rather awesome personality till 1895, when he reviewed my *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly* in *Harper's Weekly*, speaking of it with surprising warmth of interest. Very naturally I wrote to thank him, and thus began a correspondence which continued at long intervals for many years.

His missives were hard to decipher, for he had the habit of writing completely to the bottom of the fourth page of his sheet and then criss-crossing it with diagonal lines, ending in some cases on the first page, thus bringing the signature and the salutation side by side. At other times he still further complicated his page by writing backward along the margins.

In one of these cryptograms he expressed a desire to have me visit him if I should ever come to England, and when I replied that I never expected to have money enough to cross the ocean, and asked in return, "Are you never coming to America?", he responded rather sadly, "I have no intention of coming to America again".

Now here I was leaving London with a letter of invitation in my pocket and Rye less than two hours away. "Come down on Saturday and spend Sunday with me," he had written, giving me the most minute directions as to trains. And so at last I was on my way to see the writer whose stories had so aroused and irritated and awed me by their merciless criticism of American crudity.

It will probably fix my social status in England to say, for some reason not in evidence now, that I left London in a second-class carriage. If I remember rightly, I think I did this not to save money but to make a test of what the second-class coaches actually were. I had tried the third-class in company with Conan Doyle.

As I looked back on the south side of London that June afternoon, it all seemed ugly, commonplace and depressing. The railway ran to the southeast, bringing miles and miles of characterless streets into view, with acres of grimy roofs bristling with rectangular chimneys, and other acres of breweries and their tenements farther on. It was about as inspiring as the west side of Chicago, a wilderness of drab human dens and angular plots of verdureless ground.

The tragic significance of this congestion appeared sharply as we came into the green countryside, overhung by a gray sky and swept by a clean wind from the east. Here was the real England, the England of our novels. White uniformed cricketers were at play. Girls lithely contended at tennis. Scullers were moving briskly along sluggish rivers thick with boats and crowded with gay young life. It appeared that all Surrey was out for a holiday in a fresh, finished, unsoiled land, and yet the train was only a few miles out of the ugly, huge and smoky town.

Glorious curving roads ran past embowered cottages. Wooded hills succeeded comfortable farmsteads set among green pastures, while gray towers rising out of deep groves of elms and oaks suggested feudal manors. Tall roofs, lichen-spotted and black with soot, gave picturesque chimneys to the sky like clustered boles of close-growing trees. My ride through the country was a delight.

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At Ashford I deflected to the south, and almost at once the land dipped into a succession of smooth, suave, ' coast-sloping meadows. Long-armed windmills peered over the hills. Sheep fed everywhere—sheep lately sheared and looking shivery and thin by reason of it. Thatched roofs appeared, the kind I had seen in illustrations of old-time English novels; ancient homesteads very beautiful to look at, but very unsanitary to live in, I am told. The railway hedges were nicely trimmed. Faggots in bundles lay beside the cottages. Climbing roses covered the porches.

Soon all the meadows visibly descended to the sea, each slope covered with sheep. I could see the tidewater running in snake-like canals amid the flocks. Bent, sunburned shepherds were tending the lambs, each man clad in the immemorial English yeoman's smock.

LXXVIII

Then came Rye, a town set on a height overlooking the ocean. The railway wound around the foot of this hill and stopped at a little depot on the west side. As I stepped from the train a portly, brisk and smiling man met me—Henry James himself!

After a hearty handclasp he said, "It is only a short walk to my house and, if you don't mind, we'll make our way there on foot. My man will carry your bag".

As he led the way up a steep narrow cobble-paved street toward a compact, bristling cluster of old roofs and chimneys, I had a feeling that I was living a story. He was not in the least as I had expected him to be. He was cordial, hearty, plain.

The way became narrower until it was hardly more than an alley, walled by the most satisfying ancient brick dwellings, and then, suddenly, the walk made a turn and left me facing an open white doorway and huge brass knocker. "Here it is," said James. "This is my house. It is a very small one, as you see, but of rather fine Georgian type. It is old. It dates from 1716."

It was indeed small, but in perfect taste. The hall was panelled in oak, but the rooms above were finished in white. Many rare engravings hung on the walls, portraits of England's worthies, classical subjects, Italian scenes and the like. The furniture was in keeping and the entire effect was charming and restful.

As soon as I unpacked I went downstairs and James led the way to his garden, which was spacious and surrounded by a high wall. A few trees shaded one corner, and roofs with odd angles overpeered on two sides. A steeple rose not far away and a little cracked bell sounded. It was all so peaceful, so remote, that I can scarcely do justice to it. It was the place for a recluse—a dreamer such as I understood James had become.

We began to talk on subjects which mutually concerned us, and for a time James was hesitant, distressingly so. He groped for just the right word, but as we proceeded he grew less constrained and at last told me how he had found this house almost by accident, and that from the first moment he saw it he had wanted it. "It had been lived in by one continuous family since its erection until a few years ago, when it fell into the hands of an old gentleman, a resident of this town. Upon his death the widow offered it for sale and I bought it and moved my few possessions down from London. I bought it as a refuge from the city, but I now spend the larger part of my time here. It is my home."

He went on to say that he found London more and more of a distraction, a whirlpool. "As I grow older, I go to it reluctantly—in January, usually—and only for a short time. Most of the year I live in Rye. Since the death of my sister I live here alone and work —work incessantly."

He was curious about conditions of authorship in America—wanted to know more of the men whose books sold so enormously. He was amazed at my statement of the money certain writers made. He had no understanding of the great interior of America,

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none at all. Chicago was almost as alien to him as a landscape on Mars. He resented the self-satisfaction of the novelists who sold their hundreds of thousands of copies of superficial fiction. He deplored their effect on literature. "I have never even heard of them," he said, when I named two of the most successful.

It was natural that he should resent such "upstarts", for he represented something fought for, something attained with care. He stood for culture, workmanship, style. In a quiet way he was intellectually contemptuous of commercial America.

When I asked him what he was doing at the time, he replied, "I am putting a selective edition of my books into form for an American publisher". In all that he said he remained very human, very judicial and very kindly. His large, pellucid, rather prominent eyes studied me tranquilly.

LXXIX

He spoke of the placid quiet of his little town, of his kindly neighbors. "They are a great comfort to me, for I am a lonely man," he said. He spoke rejoicingly of the fact that there were only three vehicles in the village. "You noticed, perhaps, that the streets are grass-grown between the cobbles. Only now and then do I hear a footfall pass my door."

He alluded gratefully to my letters of appreciation of his stories. "I have for many years discharged my books into America as into a hollow void," he admitted with a sombre note in his voice. "No word but yours has lately come back to me."

No doubt this was an exaggeration, and yet to a certain degree it was true. He meant that I should remember his confession.

He spoke of Howells with sincere love and appreciation. "He is an artist—always—but he has written too much, and so have I."

I then quoted Howells's remark, apropos of this criticism: "But what else am I to do?" James instantly agreed. "Yes, we writers are lost without our pens in our hands."

He praised Owen Wister's work and commended Mrs. Wharton's *The Valley of Decision*, and this led up to his own fervid enthusiasm for Italy. He advised my hastening there at once. "Why study France?" he demanded. "France is only an imitation of Italy. Why waste time on the imitation when you can see the real thing?"

Precisely what he meant by this I could not determine, but I took it to mean that the historical remains of France were Roman. He could not have meant that France was in any modern sense an imitation of Italy.

A little further on he spoke of his novel, *The Ambassadors*, as the best of all he had written. "I am rewriting, not merely revising, my earlier books," he explained, and to this I could not respond with any enthusiasm. It seemed to me a kind of wholesale deception—as well as doubtful improvement. To rewrite *The Portrait of a Lady* would be but to blur its clear original outlines. However I did not say so at the moment for it would have been obvious disapproval, and if my silence gave him that impression he did not remark upon it.

He referred to Thomas Hardy as a man who had lost his power. Of his brother William James he spoke with affection. Several other American writers came in for his comment, which was never bitter or ironic. He had a certain straightforward glance which made his words sound less harsh than they would look if printed. As he described his New York ancestry I perceived that he was less remote than he had seemed to me hitherto. He said, "I still read the New York journals and keep informed of New World politics in the mass".

He became very much in earnest at last and said something which surprised and gratified me. It was an admission I had not expected him to make. "If I were to live my life over again," he said in a low voice, and fixing upon me a sombre glance, "I would be an American. I would steep myself in America—I would know no other land. I

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would study its beautiful side. The mixture of Europe and America which you see in me has proven disastrous. It has made of me a man who is neither American nor European. I have lost touch with my own people, and I live here alone. My neighbors are friendly, but they are not of my blood, except remotely. As a man grows old he feels these conditions more than when he is young. I shall never return to the United States, but I wish I could."

This may have been but a mood induced by his talk with me, but it filled me with a profound pity for this man who, in spite of his great fame, was lonely. It brought back to my mind the feeling I used to have as I read his novels filled with expatriates; a feeling of emptiness and futility, an ache of resentment which I could never quite put into words. I knew the characters he depicted were expatriates but I was never quite sure what his own attitude was with respect to those who transferred their loyalty to France or England. Whatever his mind had been, he now made it plain that he still loved the land of his youth and wished himself back in it and at home in it.

LXXX

After our tea, which was served on a little table out under the trees, he took me to see the town, pointing out the most ancient of the buildings, well knowing that as a man from the plains of Iowa I would be interested in age-worn walls and doorsills. He took me to the old Mermaid Tavern, in which was a marvellous fireplace as wide as the end of the room itself with benches at the corners. Everybody we met seemed to know and like him; whether they recognized in him a famous author or not I cannot tell, but they certainly regarded him as a good neighbor. He greeted everyone we met most genially. He was on terms with the postman and the butcher's boy. There was nothing austere or remote in his bearing. On the contrary, he had the air of a curate making the rounds of his village.

At seven o'clock we dined in his exquisite little dining room and the dinner which came on quite formally was delicious. He had no other guest, but he presided at the service end of the table with quiet formality worthy of a banquet. The mahogany glistened with the care which had been lavished upon it, the silver was interesting and beautiful, the walls of the room tasteful and cheerful—and yet I could not keep out of my mind a picture of James sitting here alone, as he confessed he did on many nights. It is sorrowful business to grow old even with your children all about you, but to grow old in a land filled with strangers is sadder still.

It was late when I went to bed that night, my mind filled with literary and artistic problems called up by his profound comment. The questions of national art, of realism and idealism, of New World garishness and crudeness, of its growing power and complexity—these were among the matters we had discussed. That James lived on the highest plane of life and thought was evident. He allowed himself no loafing, no relaxation. He had not even the comfort of a comic spirit, such as Howells had. He was in earnest all the time, a genial earnestness, but an earnestness which could not be diverted.

I put down this statement in my record: "This man lives on the highest plane. No man of his time is nobler in his aspirations as an artist. He has put the best of his life and in a sense he has put all of his life into his art. Although elusive in its expression all his work is original. No other writer or school of writers has had a share in it".

We breakfasted in such comfort, so simple but so perfect, as to form the most delightful luxury. The sun shone, in at our window, the silver gleamed cheerily, the coffee was delicious and James, immaculately clad and fresh and rosy again, presided at the opposite side of the table while his miraculous servants attended us.

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At the close of our meal I said, "It is your habit to work in the morning—that I know, and I want you to keep to your routine. Don't permit me to interrupt your morning task".

"Very well," he said. "I will take you at your word, but first I want you to see my workshop."

His "shop" was a small detached building standing in the corner of the garden, and in the large room littered with books and manuscripts I found a smart young woman stenographer at work. James showed me the changes he was making in his earlier books. In my judgment he was not bettering them; on the contrary it seemed to me he was transforming them into something which was neither of the past nor of the present. I think he was now aware of my disapproval for he went on to explain that he found in the early versions many crudities which he could not think of allowing the future to observe—"If people ever take the trouble to look into my books", he added, with a note of melancholy in his voice.

After giving me elaborate directions concerning other landmarks of the region he suddenly said, "But why should I not be your guide again? You do not come often. My work can wait".

My protests availed nothing. Putting his secretary at another task, he told me to come with him. "There are some other houses which I must show you. They are owned by some friends of mine and they will be glad to let you have a glimpse of them."

As he led me about the town, discovering for me delightful Georgian types of dwellings, the people everywhere greeted him with smiling cordiality. They liked and honored him, that was evident, and it gave me a keen sense of satisfaction to find him more and more neighborly, taking an interest in what his fellow citizens were doing and thinking. This phase of him was as surprising as it was amusing. To hear him asking after a child's health, or inquiring when Mr. Brown would return from London, was a revelation of the fact that after all he was basically more than half of New England blood.

He sped me on my way to France with a hearty invitation to come and see him on my return, and I particularly urged him to come again to America in order that we might show him the honor which so many of us were eager to pay, and also in order that we might profit by his criticism. To this he replied very thoughtfully, "I may do so, but I fear I shall not get so far as Chicago".

LXXXI

In planning my holiday I had set aside a week or two for France, and a call upon several literary friends who lived in or near Paris. Late in June I crossed the Channel and the change from the pale sunlight of England to the heat and light of France was almost like getting back to Illinois. I surrendered myself with swift elation to the sights and sounds of the radiant French summer. For several days I gave my time to wandering into every nook and corner of Paris. I wanted to know what the working people were like, and how they went about their early morning tasks. I was interested in the historical buildings and the art collections, of course, but first of all I wished to gain a picture of the city's daily life.

The only man I knew in the city was Herman MacNeil, the young sculptor who had accompanied me to the Hopi Snake Dance in '95, and the only woman I knew was Madame Blanc, the French novelist and critic who, as the guest of Alice French, had visited Chicago and St. Louis and knew many of my friends. She was living at Jouarre, about forty miles from Paris, and in accordance with a promise I now wrote telling her that I was in France.

She replied: "My brother who is visiting me, and who speaks English, wishes to meet you. Will you not come down and stay the night with us? I am eager to talk about America".

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On the day named I took a train which carried me into one of the quaintest and oldest of French villages. The Marne, a slow stream, more like a canal than a river, flowed peacefully through the town, and the life of the people, as untroubled and as leisurely as the water, seemed a thousand miles from that of the boulevards.

M. Bentzon (a merchant from Martinique) met me at the station and led me to the ancient stone cottage in which he was spending the summer with his sister. His wife and two daughters, neither of whom could understand a word of English, studied me with frank interest, for they had never before met a man from the western United States. To them I was a curiosity. The tones of my voice especially interested them, and when after dinner (at Madame Blanc's request) I read some of my dialect verses, they were all so delighted with the speech-tunes of "Go'in' Back T'morrer" that I was obliged to repeat it for them. My feeling was somewhat like that of the station agent whose harelip utterance so intrigued a small boy that his mother requested a repetition of every answer to her questions; but I was glad to give pleasure.

One sad remissness must be chronicled however. At dinner a slender glass of wine was placed beside my plate, but as I had no taste for wines whatever and had hardly taken three glasses in all my life, I left the glass standing until Madame Blanc asked me if I did not care for wine.

"Oh, yes," I replied, "but I very seldom drink it."

I took a mouthful of the lovely liquid and went on talking. I could see that for some reason my hostess was a bit less attentive and so I finished my wine with another long sip. Then I learned what a *sauvage* I was, for she said reproachfully, "That is a very old and very precious vintage which I have brought out in your honor".

Conscience-smitten and ashamed, I could only plead utter ignorance of wine. "I know only two kinds, red and white. I can't even tell the difference between ale and beer, although we used to have both at harvest time. I grew up in a prohibition state and among very simple and abstemious folk. I hope you'll pardon my untutored palate."

She forgave me, but it left me with a sore spot. Every time I thought of that dear lady putting her exquisite old wine beside my plate in expectation of my appreciation, I grew hot with mingled shame and regret.

Some months later in an article in the *Revue des deux mondes*, Madame Blanc described this invasion of *le sauvage* from the West with enthusiasm and humor, declaring that I fairly made the walls crack and bulge with my tales and laughter. This amused Lorado Taft and others of my friends, but I cannot believe she really found me so noisy. I hope she was speaking figuratively. She gave many pages to my books and was highly complimentary to some of them.

Like Bernard Shaw, she was interested in my trip to the Yukon and my studies of the American Indian. She ended by saying that I went beyond Howells in audacity, and she was right. Audacity was my strong point.

She was the first French woman I had ever met, and I found her as companionable as Alice French or Ruth McEnery Stuart. She was dark, rather stout and a little beyond middle age, serious and kindly. I liked her quiet manner and rejoiced in her plan to be an interpreter of America to France. She knew American life in the small towns as well as in the cities and was catholic enough in judgment to admit its virtues. She was especially interested in our groups of local-color novelists. She saw in them a similarity to the work of Mistral and Daudet.

I was just beginning to know Paris when I took passage for London—and home! My mother was waiting for me in Wisconsin and my conscience would not let me linger on in England, which was at its loveliest as I rode through it on my way back to Liverpool. The land was so rich with human

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records that it produced in me a wistful greed. I wanted to include them all in my book of remembrance—a hunger made all the more poignant by the feeling that I might never see the ancient oak parks and towered hills again.

It cannot be said that my spring in England and my fortnight in France had been a social triumph or that they had made any great change in me or in my writing, but I had enjoyed a personal study of two great centers of human activity. "When any one speaks to me hereafter of Paris," I made record, "I shall be able to visualize it. When the streets of London are named I shall be able (in most instances) to place them in their relationship to the Strand or to Regent Street." And, too, I had seen enough of English country life to compare notes with others.

Furthermore, the story which I had outlined before leaving Chicago and which was accepted by Gilder and published in the *Century Magazine* reimbursed me for all my outlay. This manuscript and my evening suit while not precisely spoils of conquest were concrete evidences of my Old World invasion. Thereafter formal dinners had no terrors for me. Safe within my social uniform I mixed indistinguishably with the coal kings and college presidents of my native land.

Most lasting of all the pleasures of this vacation, however, were the meetings with the most admired of my fellow craftsmen. I knew Bernard Shaw and Thomas Hardy as hosts as well as great writers. I had renewed my acquaintance with Barrie and Kipling and I had formed several other new and valued friendships. I had talked with Mark Twain and Bret Harte and had gained a better knowledge of the charm which held certain expatriates year after year in the capitals of the Old World. Acknowledging this charm, I knew that safety lay in flight, and I sailed into the west as my ancestors had done nearly three hundred years before, treasuring all my pleasant experiences. As another of America's literary pilgrim sons I freely acknowledge the educative value of ancestral memories.

THE END

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THE NEW PULITZER PRIZE POET

by Stanley P. Chase

In awarding the Pulitzer prize for poetry to Mr. Conrad Aiken, the judges have given deserved recognition to a poet who for fifteen years or more has practised his art with a singular steadfastness of aim, and whose work is not only impressive in amount but in sustained quality of execution as well. In a time given to wide literary experimentation, Mr. Aiken has followed his own line; and if it is true that in his verse one detects the influence now of this contemporary and now of that, more importantly the collection as a whole reveals him as a poet of undeniable individuality and independent achievement.

Selected Poems (Scribner's. $3.50), which won the prize, to the delight of a large body of readers, includes nothing from Mr. Aiken's first book, and only four poems from his second and fourth books. His other six books of verse—*The Jig of Forslin, The Charnel Rose, The House of Dust, Punch: The Immortal Liar, The Pilgrimage of Festus* and *Priapus and the Pool*—are given, with the exception of the title poem from *The Charnel Rose*, in their entirety. We have thus a considerable body of verse (over three hundred and fifty rather closely printed pages), which saw publication from 1916 to 1925.

The affinities of Mr. Aiken's poetry with music, which have been often remarked, are doubtless connected with his particular psychical constitution, but no less they are the result of deliberate intention to achieve contrapuntal effects in verse. To condense his own account of the technique of his "symphonic poems", his idea was to use "a large medium", to divide it into several main parts, and to subdivide these parts into short movements in various veins and forms. The variations from part to part are a matter of emotional tone no less than of verse-form, the "emotion-masses" being manipulated with as much regard to their positions in the total design as are the forms themselves. The poet thus becomes an artist in emotions, valuing them not for their own sakes, but only for their "most delicately evocative aspects", and "plays upon them a music of which the chief characteristic is its elusiveness, its fleetingness, and its richness in the shimmering overtones of hint and suggestion".

All readers of Mr. Aiken's previous volumes will recognize the accuracy of this description of the larger musical effects. In pure melody, in the effortless rhythmic flow of his verse, Mr. Aiken has few equals among contemporary poets. A more concentrated lyric quality, exhibited in a great variety of stanzaic forms, is found in his last volume, *Priapus and the Pool*—as, for example, in the poem on "Atlantis" with its clear, bell-like music:

> There was an island in the sea
> That out of immortal chaos reared
> Towers of topaz, trees of pearl,
> For maidens adored and warriors feared.

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Long ago it sunk in the sea;
And now, a thousand fathoms deep,
Sea-worms above it whirl their lamps,
Crabs on the pale mosaic creep.

Voyagers over that haunted sea
Hear from the waters under the keel
A sound that is not wave or foam;
Nor do they only hear, but feel

The timbers quiver, as eerily comes
Up from the dark an elfin singing
Of voices happy as none can be,
And bells an ethereal anthem ringing.

Thereafter, where they go or come,
They will be silent; they have heard
Out of the infinite of the soul
An incommunicable word;

Thereafter, they are as lovers who
Over an infinite brightness lean:
"It is Atlantis!", all their speech;
"To lost Atlantis have we been."

But it is in the free, partly rhymed verse-paragraph that Mr. Aiken achieves his most characteristic effects:

The day ended, and the slow-wheeling magnificent constellations
Glided like lights of ships down the river of space,
And Festus was disturbed once more, and wished to speak,
And heavily raised his head at last in sorrow,
And turned toward the stars his face,
And said: "Look, Festus, how yet once more the immortals
Kindle their delicate lanterns and walk in the sky
While you on a lonely hill sit alone in sadness
And remember that you must die!
Look at the stars, Festus, treader of kingdoms,
You who carried the world like a bird in a cage,
You whose heart is a desert, gaunt with winter,
You whose sword in youth was a sevenfold lightning
Now worn and green with age!
Look! the immortals once more in the sky of your heart
The immortals you scorned and forgot
Walk in the dim blue gardens softly apart
To a music you taught them not! . . ."

Upon finishing one of Mr. Aiken's characteristic longer poems, one feels that he has been listening to a piece of orchestral music; there has been the same flow of emotional experience; feelings, memories, fancies, have been evoked, and have dissolved, one melting into another; there has seemed to be a progression, a cyclical movement, which gave a unity amid the variety; there have been repeated phrasings, returns upon the thought, exquisite cadences. A great number of separate scenes, images, moods, of a singularly homogeneous texture, remain with one rather clearly: such recurrent images as waves breaking on a pebbly beach, street lamps in the rain, doors opened and closed in dark corridors, lights of the city seen from a high window, faces in the street, rose-petals scattered from white hands, come thronging back. We may be able to say, in general, what the theme has been—as in *The House of Dust* the idea of vicariousness, or in *The Pilgrimage of Festus* the Faust-quest. But to recall the structure or design with more explicitness, to say just what has happened to Forslin or Senlin or Festus, or to show how the separate parts which we remember are connected with the whole, would be difficult.

Mr. Aiken's analysis of his method referred to above (which appeared in *Poetry* in 1919) furnishes a better description of the effect his poetry produces than do the two paragraphs on the jacket of the *Selected Poems*. It may be agreed that his poetry deals "with the borderland world between dream and reality"; and perhaps that it "combines a flowing music with a realism tender, relentless, and ironic". But when, continuing, we read that "the author's gift as a story-teller possessing remarkable insight into human character makes a strong appeal to readers not ordinarily interested in verse", we are moved to express scepticism. No point of that last sentence seems to me true. Mr.

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Aiken is deficient, I think, in the power of story-telling, at least in verse, his gift being introspective and lyrical; his insight into character is acute in certain directions, but limited by the psychological dogmas he has espoused; and to readers not already poetically minded the appeal of his poetry, consistently beautiful though it is, will be slight.

To say that Mr. Aiken is deficient in narrative power and in wide popular appeal is not necessarily detraction. I account Mr. Aiken a very fine artist, but think his affinities in poetry are not with the type represented by Chaucer and Browning, but rather with that, let us say, of Donne, Coleridge and T. S. Eliot. Now in this so largely subjective, or, if you please, metaphysical, kind of poetry, it is uncommon to find as firm and clear an organization of the poetic experience as in the other type, where outward event is of more importance. Shelley's *Alastor*, for instance, has less of it than his *The Cenci*, where the source itself supplies something of the sort. And the poem of Mr. Aiken's which has the largest amount of external happening, *Punch: The Immortal Liar*, is least open to criticism on this score. But here, it seems to me, if we compare him with the best of his own kind, is Mr. Aiken's weakness on the formal side. What between the "elusive and delicately evocative" aspects of emotion with which he deals and the poet's concern for the musical values of expression, something even more important to poetry is sacrificed. In single passages Mr. Aiken can put his meaning with great forthrightness and with no loss of beauty (cf. pp. 119-123 and 286-7), but the poems as wholes, when regarded from the point of view of their ideas, have no such firm organic structure.

In his adherence to the Freudian psychology and his adoption of the symbolism derived from such works as *The Golden Bough*, Mr. Aiken's poetry is closely linked with the prevailing interests and outlook of the last quarter-century. (In passing, one might note, by way of illustration, the passage beginning "By the clear waters where once I died", from Section xii of Part II of *The House of Dust*, or the ninth lyric of *Priapus and the Pool*, in connection with the theories of Miss Jessie Weston and the "poetry of drought" of Mr. Eliot.) Few will deny that there is some element of truth in the Freudian analysis which traces all the higher and more complex psychical activities of human beings to sex-impulses first repressed, then sublimated or transformed. Failure to achieve such sublimation of these repressed desires is said to lead to the frustration which we see all around us, particularly among the middle-aged, in a world organized economically and socially upon quite other principles. Our quarrel with the Freudians comes over the question of *how far* the theory may may be legitimately used to explain these maladjustments. And with Mr. Aiken, as with so many other adherents of the school, one feels that the theory has led to his conceiving human character too simply; that an excessive preoccupation with these phenomena has led him to disregard whole areas of human thought and achievement in which fulfilment rather than frustration has been the typical experience; and that thus his poetry has lacked contact with fields in which his gift might have found a richer material. But the limitation is one which he shares with almost an entire generation.

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FICTION

BRIEF CANDLES *by Aldous Huxley* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

ONE may say that in general the modern novel is a faithful record of the out-workings of a naturalism which has led to despair; it tends to present a vividly negative portrait of peripheral chaos without that positive central order, that purposeful pattern, which raises art above the cluttered incoherence of everyday experience. Although Aldous Huxley is equal to most of the naturalists in daring, irony, verbal vividness, rancid realism and surface brilliance, his *Brief Candles* seems to me primarily important for its central core of thought, which gives to these three short stories and a novelette a momentum of meaning. Mr. Huxley not only paints graphic portraits of modern restlessness and despair; he endeavors to suggest the causes of despair and the sources of happiness. Briefly, one may say that the center around which these stories is written is the conviction—not unlike that of the new humanism—that modern despair is partly a result of extremism, of a disregard for balance and poise and a proportionate synthesis of normal human values. He has given us a gallery of men and women reeling desperately from one extreme to its opposite as they approach apathy or suicide.

For example, in "Chawdron" unbalanced materialism breeds unbalanced sentimentality. Nemesis, who guarantees that "you shall reap what you sow", decrees that we shall see Chawdron, "the ruthless Napoleon of finance, paying for his ruthlessness and his Napoleonism by dissolving internally into hog-wash" and becoming the sentimental victim of an adventuress posing as "a mixture between St. Catherine of Siena and Mahatma Gandhi". "Super-humanity is as bad as sub-humanity." Chawdron's fate is that of "everybody who aspires to be non-human—whether angel or machine it doesn't matter". "The Rest Cure", hackneyed in plot but most finished in structure, attacks specialized scientific rationalism and a neglect of normal human emotions as resulting in restlessness and sensualism. Moira, grand-daughter of a physician whose devotion to duodenal ulcers had "prevented the neglected instinctive part of him from fully growing up", marries "a keen young research student" perpetually "focused on a tumor". Her husband's extremism finally results in his wife's allowing herself to be seduced by "a black-haired pimp from the slums of Naples". The seducer wearies of her extreme sensuality, and after she discovers him with another woman she commits suicide. "The Claxtons" develops the idea that while "brewing almost infallibly leads to impressionism or theosophy or communism", the extremism of this "conquest of spirituality" and this "determined love for humanity" lead to the extremism of hypocrisy, savagery, and despair. The ascetic mother becomes secretly a glutton, and she does not know that "the best way of turning a child into a devil is to try to bring it up as an angel". Paul, the son nursed on the humanitarianism of Morris and Tolstoy, delights in killing animals. "After the Fireworks" presents a fifty-year-old novelist, enamored of the synthetic and restrained poise of which the Etruscan Apollo was the emblem, yielding after a long inner conflict to the charms and allurements of a young girl, only to have his own prophecies come true. He foresaw that their love—hers based on the illusions of her novel-fed imagination, "unnatural by nature"; his based on

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his lust for her "outrageously fresh young body"—would be "a race through boredom, misunderstanding, disillusion, towards the final whipping-post of cruelty and betrayal".

If such is the periphery of Huxley's modern world, what does he suggest as a positive and hope-inspiring center for the guidance of conduct? He seems to see hope chiefly through a purposeful and disciplined imitation of an imaginative synthesis of those human ideals which the past, made accessible through culture, has demonstrated to be productive of lasting satisfaction. Soulless Philistines have bred a worse evil—"soulful" ones.

> In the end they go mad, these soulful Philistines. Mad with self-consciousness and vanity and egotism and a kind of hopeless bewilderment; for when you're utterly without culture, every fact's an isolated, unconnected fact, every experience is unique and unprecedented. . . . I've seen them, lots of them, gone utterly crazy. In the past they had organized religion, which meant that somebody had once been cultured for them, vicariously. But what with protestantism and the modernists, their philistinism's absolute now. . . . They spend their lives staring at their own navels and in the intervals trying to find other people who'll take an interest and come and stare too.

If culture enables man to envisage life healthily in objective terms of broader generalizations which help to steady him amid the welter of his particular difficulties, Huxley would ally culture with the doctrine of disciplined imitation so hated by the romantic "original geniuses" since the eighteenth century. Indeed, he defines "the practice of morality" as successful imitation or acting.

> It's acting the part of a saint, or a hero, or a respectable citizen. What's the highest ethical ideal in Christianity? It's expressed in a Kempis's formula—*The Imitation of Christ*. So that the organized Churches turn out to be nothing but vast and elaborate Academies of Dramatic Art. . . . All education, aside from merely intellectual education, is just a series of rehearsals for the part of Jesus or Podsnap or Alexander the Great, or whoever the local favourite may be. A virtuous man is one who's learned his part thoroughly and acts it competently and convincingly. The saint and the hero are great actors. . . .

Given the cultural key to the past and the doctrine of imitation, what aspects of the past is man to select for a model? During the World War, when mankind oscillated between the "extravagance of beastliness" and the "extravagance of heroism", the novelist had discovered the Etruscan Apollo, a "voice out of the past", "a God who doesn't admit the separate existence of either heroics or diabolics, but somehow includes them in his own nature and turns them into something else". This God is Homer's "portrait", Homer whose men and women are "complete and real; for he leaves nothing out". And of this God, so "beautifully sane", and of the "integrated man", the novelist has become the "worshipper and self-appointed priest". One is reminded somewhat of Emerson's devotion to the Greek tradition for its synthesis of Unity and Variety, and his ideal of centrality, of being "ripened to that degree that he touches both the center and the circumference". But Huxley's incongruous endeavor to express this high philosophy in terms somewhat wearily smart and lurid is symptomatic of a deeper incongruity. While the novelist confesses "I'd like to think and live in the unsplit, Apollonian way . . . I can't help indulging in aspirations and disgusts; I can't help thinking in terms of heroics and diabolics. Because the division, the splitness, has been worked right into my bones . . . I'd like to be able to think and live in the spirit of the God. But the fact remains that I can't. . . . You can't take a Turvey treatment for spirituality and disgust. You can't. Not nowadays". And therefore, a clear-eyed and unwilling victim of the Zeitgeist, he oscillates between the "leg level" and the "Dante level", powerless to embrace that human level whose moderation, proportionateness, and synthetic balance give peace.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

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CIMARRON *by Edna Ferber* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

IN 1889 Sabra Cravat, dressed in gray cheviot braided with elaborate curlycues, wearing a bonnet with a bird on it, and high button boots, mounted the seat of a covered wagon and drove from the comparative civilization of Wichita, Kansas, to the red wastes of the newly opened Oklahoma. In the wagon ahead was her Peer Gynt of a husband, the picturesque, mysterious Yancey Cravat. She took with her her silver spoons and cake dish, monogrammed linen, her principles and her traditions. He took with him his printing press, the six shooters that were already notched, his hatred of settled, humdrum life.

It was freedom and newness that the man wanted; the woman wanted the old order replanted upon the new soil. Together they came to the nightmare of Osage—a "city" of shanties and tents, filled with scum and heroes, with grim pioneer women and harlots. Here the man and woman started a newspaper and raised two children. But slowly Osage grew respectable, a little stale. The man could not endure it and went on to newer lands. The woman, left alone most of the time, ran the social life, the newspaper, the city, and then went to Congress. In the end Yancey dies. His life has been wandering, heroic, quixotic, a little absurd (he is too "silver-tongued" for the modern mind). Hers has been brave, successful—arid.

Miss Ferber picturesquely calls the battle which she describes so dramatically the battle between "the sunbonnets and the sombreros". From the first, Sabra Cravat and the other "basically conventional women were working unconsciously, yet with a quiet ferocity, towards that day when one of them would be able to say, standing in a doorway with a stiff little smile upon her face,

" 'Awfully nice of you to come'.

" 'Awfully nice of you to ask me', the other would reply." The sunbonnets triumph. Osage in forty years has become exactly the sort of place the women wanted. But what of those wild, childish, freedom-loving wearers of the sombreros? Many, like the magnificent Yancey Cravat, may today be bums and idlers, hanging about construction camps. Once there was work on an heroic scale for these American Peer Gynts to do, but now the Osages of an earlier day have become only one more Minneapolis, Louisville, Zenith City. . . . So the sunbonnet has triumphed.

Around the principal characters are grouped a rousing galaxy of lesser stars—bad men and worse women, millionaire Indians (the money comes to them through oil—my favorite detail in the book—wonderful Indians!), Venus Lodges, Culture Clubs, dance hall proprietors, a living medley of engaging humanity, including a Jewish shopkeeper who is the flower of an ancient civilization.

Some lecture on "the modern novel" might take for comparison Miss Roberts's *The Great Meadow* and Miss Ferber's *Cimarron*. Both tell a similar story of how women left security and peace for the sake of the men they loved and went out into a wilderness to found a new land. Both authors have chosen as protagonists rather average, unimaginative women. It seems to me remarkable how Miss Ferber by her native vigor avoids the pitfalls Miss Roberts sinks into, and with what enthusiasm and humor Miss Ferber plunges into bogs neatly side-stepped by the fastidious Miss Roberts. In Miss Ferber's world little coons fall into cream puddings, you get the hat shot off your head, you are cheated of your claim by a hussy in black tights. With Miss Roberts you may go by wagon from Virginia to the Blue Grass and only be molested by the hooting of a false owl. You may see your husband's mother murdered and scalped by savages and the affair fade away into a twilight of Berkeleian philosophy. Miss Ferber is closer to the heart of life and she is further from "art". Although the central story of Sabra Cravat lacks something of the charm of *Show Boat* and *So Big*, still *Cimarron* is certainly Edna Ferber at her best.

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THARLANE *by Dorothy Cottrell* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

THARLANE is a vast tract of unbreakable, virgin, Australian land that "old H. B.", the unscrupulous corpulent central figure of the story, starts out to conquer. It takes him twenty years to accomplish this ambition. The waste land at last is filled with sheep and beeves. Water and white men flow into the desert. But at that moment Nemesis overtakes this Australian Napoleon. At the beginning of the book his false testimony sends an impotent and innocent man to prison. The man serves his time and comes out to take his vengeance. He sets the dry bush land of Tharlane on fire, destroying H. B.'s prosperity and life.

This story is a mixture of good and bad. The bad has a bookish smell, as though during formative years the writer had read too deeply of sloppy sentimental romance. In this category I put Donald the shearer's wooing of Georgina, the half-caste girl—in fact the whole unlikely personality of Donald —and I put Sandy and his wooing, and the wooing of everybody and all the childhoods. In the category of good I put all those things which seem to be rooted in observation—the look of the land, the casual description of local types. There is a magnificent fight to death between two "men" kangaroos, and the flight of the herds and the exotic Australian wild life before the roaring flames in the last chapter is far removed from the saccharine words of the lovers. This is, I believe, Miss Cottrell's second novel. *Singing Gold* was published a few years ago.

ESTHER FORBES

CHRISTINE *by Julian Green* (HARPERS. $2.50)

TO SAY Julian Green's work to date has given plentiful evidence of a markedly unusual talent is to re-state a threadbare truth, while to dismiss his present volume without the accrued superlatives is to fly directly into the teeth of current criticism. I beg permission to do both these things. I beg permission to file a complaint that the stories in *Christine*, though fused with the spark which ignited a flare of popularity for *Avarice House* and the later novels, are the unsubstantial shadows of more durable work—slight variations on a well (and much) written theme. "Christine", the gem of the collection, is itself a little masterpiece of the uncanny, but the companion tales are for the main part unsatisfying accounts of neurasthenic individuals who die horribly from causes unknown.

In this disillusioned age such mortuary parlor tricks will not hold a steady audience, unless they are, like Poe's macabre gymnastics, a frank return to the sources of horror and imagination which have created folk-tales for centuries. Julian Green's stories, however, are sicklied over by the pale cast of modern psychology. In spite of some fairly decent writing they do not ring true; neither do they hang together.

LEO KENNEDY

MEDAL WITHOUT BAR *by Richard Blaker* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

RICHARD BLAKER'S enormous and minutely detailed account of the war-time experiences of a British lieutenant of artillery is something quite unusual among the current deluge of war novels. Without ignoring or minimizing the horror and cruelty of modern warfare, without attempting to explain or justify the emotions it engenders, he has painted a vast and objective picture of men in battle—men of normal courage, neither brutal nor hypersensitive, good workmanlike fellows who did what had to be done without whimpering or without heroics. Lieutenant Cartwright is an intelligent man, a lawyer in civil life, who is already approaching the upper age limit at the outbreak of the war. Without particularly liking the idea of war, he enlists because of a certain implied obligation. Yet, unconsciously, the war is welcome to him, because it offers

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him an escape from an existence too peaceful, too monotonous, too secure. He finds in it terror and agony, but also freedom and fellowship—an obscurely joyous feeling of danger and consequence and self-fulfillment such as he had never known before.

Richard Blaker has given us an unforgettable picture of the mechanical aspects of war, of the work of the big guns and the subalterns who manned and directed them. This is the finest feature of *Medal Without Bar*. Otherwise, notwithstanding its prodigious accuracy, its faithful and sympathetic characterizations, its undeniably realistic dialogue, the book is liable to a charge of dulness. The leisurely pace which enables Mr. Blaker to catch something of the quality and fulness of life, carries with it, at the same time, a little of the tedium and weariness which life itself, unedited, is more than likely to produce.

MARGARET WALLACE

VISA TO FRANCE *by Barry Fleming* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

MR. FLEMING calls his book a "frivolous novel"—partly no doubt for commercial reasons, but more shrewdly because by doing so he hopes to be released from the more serious responsibilities of the novelist. It is plain, at any rate, that he has shirked them. He has taken the easiest of all ways out, plumping down ten or twelve people of five or six nationalities on the coast of France and letting them talk their way through two months of inactivity. Train, the novelist, talks instead of writing; an unhappy woman talks instead of acting; the marchese talks out of preference; and the social-climbing American woman talks only to the right people. Nothing happens: I suppose that is what Mr. Fleming set out to show.

The book is always engagingly written. Here and there it spurts with amusement, then falls back into longueurs. There is some really clever and cultivated discussion of America and Europe, and there are flashbacks into the past lives of the characters, which reveal that once upon a time they were mildly animated human beings. Cut to the pattern of facile sophistication, *Visa to France* is less good than similar books like *Whatever We Do* or Charles Brackett's *American Colony* because it lacks their characterizations, their insight into manners, their ability to make the world, during intervals between drinks, seem gay. Mr. Fleming preaches boredom; and practises what he preaches.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

THE DEVIL'S SPOON *by Theodora Du Bois* (STOKES. $2.50)

HAROOT is a fascinating spirit who, according to the Koran, and for the purposes of Mrs. Du Bois's story, had been swinging by his heels in a rocky pit at Babel for thousands of years as a punishment. His tortures are interrupted by his diabolic master, who sends him to Earth on a mission. To accomplish this, Haroot is obliged to slip into a human body, and happens into that of Benjy Bingham at the moment the latter is killed. The late Benjy had been a fat, spoiled and peevish individual, and Haroot has a difficult time throwing off the corporeal and mental encumbrances which had distinguished his predecessor. Haroot also discovers a charming Mrs. Bingham, who is somewhat astonished at the new spirit animating her husband. Her previous contempt, nurtured by several years of marriage, begins to dissipate, and Haroot, in spite of his mission and his netherworld status, falls in love with her, and presumably liberates himself from any obligation to return to Babel. However the book is taken—satire, story, allegory, an evening's entertainment—it will be found capital fun, with an idea completely out of the beaten fictional track. The humor, farce, and love episodes are not over-emphasized, and there is an agreeable swing to the writing.

EDMUND KENNEDY

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THE MAN OF GOD *by Count Edouard von Keyserling* (MACAULAY. $2.00)

As IN *Tides,* Count von Keyserling is, in *The Man of God,* concerned with people who are held back from living the full possibilities of their lives. A simple story, almost Russian in its lack of emphasis, the novel is noticeable for that indeterminate quality, that frustration of its characters, which seems to be the hallmark of this novelist. Because of its very simplicity the book is effective, for it is not an easy thing to take tortuous doubts, jealousy and passion, to say nothing of all the undercurrents of subconscious feeling in a complex character, and weave them into a quiet, almost gentle, tale that has, nevertheless, all the potential force of a charge of unexploded dynamite.

If Pastor Werner ever realizes that he is in love with his neighbor, the Baroness Carola, he has no intention of allowing it to influence his life. But when the Baron Rast is proved to ride nightly to keep tryst with her, the pastor cannot stay indoors, and must go each midnight to the Gallows Bridge, over which Rast drives in his swiftly-drawn sleigh. Standing in the snow, bitter cold, unseen, the pastor hopes that some night the rotten bridge will give way. He even pushes several boards through, listening to them drop with a sickening splash into the icy water below, but when the Baron's sleigh is about to cross, he steps out and saves the man from his own plot. When the Baroness runs off with Rast, the pastor continues his friendship with her invalid husband. The latter's death and her return, without explanation, to the castle briefly conclude the episode of her elopement and open the pages of the unwritten story, its sequel.

Here is the Sadie Thompson theme with a less pathological, more ordinary turn. The pastor is tortured not by his lust for the Baroness so much as by seeing her gratify that of a man he believes to be a scoundrel. It is easier to imagine this "man of God" as a living, ordinary human being than it is to accept Maugham's more intense missionary; but lacking the exaggeration of Maugham's story, this also lacks that which will force it into the memory of the reader.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

HER PRIVATES WE *by Private 19022* (PUTNAM. $2.50)

To GIVE the substance of any war book has by this time become vain repetition. It should be enough to say that *Her Privates We* is concerned with the activities of a British infantry battalion in the Somme and Ancre areas during the latter half of 1916. As a study in the anonymity of war—that is, in the life and conversation of private soldiers and the spirit of *sauve qui peut* which animates advance as well as retreat and pursues its victims to the rest-camp and the leave-train—it has been compared, inevitably perhaps, with *All Quiet On The Western Front.* If any comparison is to be made it is this. The anonymity of *All Quiet* was gladiatorial and the reading of it something of a Roman holiday; it was a combination of good propaganda and good showmanship, and therefore sincere; but not with the sincerity that makes a good book. And the difference of *Her Privates We* is this: its background is chiefly that of the rest-camp, its action comparatively normal, its tone quiet, its motive a transparent honesty, and its effect the attainment (more nearly than in any war book I have read) of an exact analysis of the word "nightmare"—that is, the ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances, and circumstances not violently torn from the normal, but quietly and wickedly sifted down to the last particular. This is the abominable meaning of war, the real horror. And for offering so clear an interpretation of it, and for refusing to plead, affront or magnify, *Her Privates We* fully justifies its publication and success.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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ENFANTS TERRIBLES *by Jean Cocteau* (BREWER & WARREN. $2.50)

AT LAST Jean Cocteau has written a great novel. Until the appearance of *Enfants Terribles* he had expressed himself fully only in poetry and in the theatre, where his disarming fantasy and intellectual acrobatics long ago established him as the fuse-box of contemporary literature through which, at least, all currents passed if they did not actually emanate from it. But when his achievement as a novelist was judged on the basis of *Thomas the Imposter* and *Le Grand Ecart*, he remained decidedly in the second class. In his new book, however, he has chosen a subject at once dear to modern readers and remarkably congenial to Cocteau's genius.

Whether the adolescent came into his own with Rousseau's *Confessions* or with Fromentin's *Dominique*, it is certain that novels of adolescence have only lately become popular. Jacques de Lacretelle with his *Silbermann*, Valéry Larbaud with *Fermina Marquez* and *Enfantines*, set the fashion which was immediately followed by lesser writers. Cocteau deserves the credit of being the first to recognize that the next step after the child as subject matter would logically be the child as author and to this end he urged his young friends Raymond Radiguet and Jean Desbordes to publish their youthful impressions before they lost their freshness.

The experiment was not altogether satisfactory; now in *Enfants Terribles* he has surpassed his disciples by presenting a more harmonious, more artfully composed picture of childhood. From the snowball fight in the school court-yard to the inevitable double suicide with which the book closes, the novel centers on Paul and Elizabeth, the brother and sister who refuse to grow up. Gerard and Agatha are merely incidental figures whose love for Elizabeth and Paul presents a momentary opposition to the love of brother and sister. But after her marriage and the timely death of her husband in an accident, Elizabeth disposes of them by marrying them to each other.

Nevertheless *Enfants Terribles* is not so much concerned with incestuous love as with the prolongation of childhood taking place under artificial circumstances. The room in whose eerie atmosphere the brother and sister, and later the four children, abandon themselves to their strange play of fancy and thus escape the life without, is one of the principal factors in the tragedy. One would like to know in fact how much this book, written during a recent cure at the sanatorium of Saint Cloud, reflects its author's escape from the effects of age into a dream-world of drugs. Perhaps in *Opium*, announced for immediate publication in France, Cocteau will clear up this point.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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BIOGRAPHY

THE LIFE AND MIND OF EMILY DICKINSON *by Genevieve Taggard* (KNOPF. $4.00)

ANY biography of Emily Dickinson must rest upon a slender foundation. Her books were posthumous, her papers were destroyed, she had no confidante, and she herself was morbidly secretive. In short, she left behind her just enough to ensure the continued curiosity of future generations. It is natural, the human race being as it is, that of all the meagre circumstances of Emily's life, the love affair—hinted at in her poems and in one of her letters—should monopolize attention. Madame Bianchi referred to the circumstances in her *Life and Letters*, Miss Pollitt built her biography on the theory (almost certainly erroneous) that Major Hunt was her lover, and now Miss Taggard spends too large a part of an otherwise admirable study in attempting to prove that the man was the Reverend George Gould, a hitherto unheard of clergyman of Worcester.

Her direct evidence is simple, brief and weighty. It consists of an affidavit and letter from a person designated as "X", and identified only as the woman who copied the *Further Poems*. The mysterious "X" claims to have been told by Emily's sister, Lavinia, by her servant, Maggie, and by Mrs. A. B. H. Davis, that the man Emily loved was George Gould, that Emily's father forbade her to see him, that she promised Gould always to dress in white and never again to go outside her gate, and that for ten years they secretly corresponded through Deacon Sweetser, the village store-keeper. "This revelation," says Miss Taggard, "is the single fact we have so much needed to know in order to simplify Emily's life, cluttered as it now is with absurd and unnatural suppositions."

By itself, this might carry conviction. Unfortunately, when Miss Taggard attempts to substantiate it by circumstantial evidence, conviction falters. She surmises that Emily *may* have written her first letter to Higginson because she knew he was staying in Worcester (George Gould's city), although it is infinitely more reasonable that she wrote in care of the *Atlantic* which had just printed his "Letter to a Young Contributor". She surmises that George Gould *may* have urged her to send Higginson her poems, although there is no evidence that he even knew of him. She surmises that the lovers *may* have met during Emily's Philadelphia visit, and paints a pretty idyll of their meeting, exclaiming, "Now the love story is plausible", only to invalidate it by a foot-note admitting that records place Gould in the West at that time. She surmises, equally without reason, that brother Austin who "doubtless liked George Gould" *may* have arranged a meeting in Cambridge. She surmises that Gould, who toured Europe with Gough, the temperance lecturer, *may* have met the Brownings which, in turn, *may* account for Emily's interest in them. At all these surmises, the reader's confidence totters, and when Miss Taggard contradicts Madame Bianchi's statement that Emily loved a married man (Gould did not marry until 1862) by declaring her "incapable of such treachery against the kind of love she was always glorifying", the only possible reply is "Nonsense".

But the chief difficulty in accepting the Gould theory as the final word is Emily's own statement. In the only reference she herself ever made to the affair, (her first

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letter to Higginson, April 1862), she wrote, "Soon after, my tutor [Leonard Humphrey] died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land". Now Humphrey died in 1850, the very year in which Gould graduated from Amherst, parted from Emily according to "X", and disappeared entirely from her life so far as records show. At that time, incidentally, Emily was only twenty years old and Gould, presumably, not much older. Finally, there is no evidence to show that Gould was anything more than a humdrum clergyman, nor is any mention whatever by him of Emily adduced as corroborative evidence, which is rather extraordinary in view of the fact that Miss Taggard has apparently had access to his note-books.

No, decidedly George Gould will not do as the object of Emily's great passion. George and Emily may have been in love, and this may have been the only episode of the kind of which her family knew; but from the evidence at hand, it was almost certainly a boy and girl affair and not the grand passion that dominated Emily's life and inspired her poetry, and which may, after all, have existed only in her imagination. It is probable that this affair will never be fully revealed unless or until the Dickinson family put an end to surmise by making public whatever information is in their possession. Meanwhile, if new evidence and new lovers continue to pile up, the affair will soon assume a complexity requiring the life study of a synod of scholars to unravel.

Having dealt so fully with the least satisfactory aspects of the book, I have space only to summarize its many excellences. For the first time full justice has been done to the dominating part played in Emily's life by her father, that enigmatic New Englander who fenced her from the world that he might preserve her for himself and who was capable both of denying all pleasures to his children and of ringing the church bell to summon the villagers to behold a laudable sunset. For the first time Emily is shown against the intellectual background of her age through a series of sketches of such figures as Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and the Brontës, in so far as their lives or writings impinged upon her own. Above all, Miss Taggard, herself a poet, excels in her analysis of Emily's poetry, of her psychology, and of her methods of literary creation. She has been able intuitively to project herself into Emily's mind and to study it with sympathy and with understanding. Her summing up is admirable. "No poet ever came so close to failure; no one ever walked so near insanity, and remained sane, or held in so desperate a war such contending obsessions, vanities, aversions, shames, or fierce desires for splendour and applause."

ROCKWELL LAWRENCE

SAINT AUGUSTINE *by Giovanni Papini* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.00)

TEN years ago Giovanni Papini, picturesque leader of agnostics and futurists, about-faced and achieved international fame by enrolling himself in the Church Universal. Now breaking the long silence which followed his *Life of Christ*, he appears with a penetrating and intimate "story of a soul" which is at once a splendid biography of St. Augustine, the converted sinner, and a continuation of the author's own confessions begun in *The Failure*. "I fancied," writes Papini in the preface to his new work, "there existed a resemblance between us: he also had been a man of letters and lover of words, but at the same time a restless seeker after philosophies and truths,—even to the point of being tempted by occultism; he also had been sensual and had sought fame. I resembled him in what was bad in him, of course, but after all I did resemble him."

And we have cause to feel grateful for the student's identification of his subject with himself. For in his own early divagations he

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finds an illuminating parallel to Saint Augustine's blind stumbling from Manichaeism to occultism to neo-Platonism. His own contradictory nature offers a key to the interpretation of Saint Augustine's fundamental dualism with its source in the "two seeds" from which he sprang: those two dominant and warring motives in his character, the paternal and the maternal; on the one hand the sensual, pagan and material, on the other the spiritual, intellectual and Christian. Once meditation on the life of a great saint had helped Papini through his spiritual crisis; now by a reversal of the process, he translates his benefactor's *itinerarium in Deum* in terms of his own experience. Thus in paying off his debt he renders at the same time a most fitting homage.

That he does this without a single reference to himself, save for the hint given out in the preface, is all the more remarkable. In this biography of a soul one sees an agony and a redemption which were repeated in almost the same circumstances after an interval of over fifteen centuries. This explains why the image of the young Augustine with all his vices is so extraordinarily alive; this explains likewise why the second half of the book is weaker than the first, for as Chesterton has said it would take a saint to write the life of a saint.

Mary Prichard Agnetti deserves the highest praise for her excellent work of translation. It is unfortunate, however, that the publisher, who is to be congratulated on his choice of illustrations, could not have prevented the composer of jacket blurbs from four times describing Saint Augustine as a "Roman", when if he had merely read the first sentence of the book he would have learned that "To begin with, Aurelius Augustinus was a Numidian. If the fact of his nationality be lost sight of, certain aspects of his psychology must remain incomprehensible". And if he had read further he would have learned that this "Roman" spent only two years of his long life in Rome.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS *by G. F. Lahey, S.J.* (OXFORD. $3.00)

THIS brief biographical study, written as a complement to the new edition of Hopkins's poems announced for fall publication, appears as the first satisfactory introduction to the work of an unjustly ignored poet. Indeed, merely by telling the story of his life of devotion and renunciation, his present apologist easily accounts for the oblivion into which this forerunner of T. S. Eliot allowed himself to fall without a struggle. Born in Essex in 1844, Gerard Hopkins reached Oxford just as the Movement begun by John Henry Newman was at its height; there he came into contact with Jowett, Pater, Pusey and others among the intellectual leaders, but it was Newman who from his retreat at Birmingham exerted the greatest influence on the brilliant young scholar. His conversion to the Roman Catholic Church took place when he finished his course, and immediately he entered the Jesuit order. In 1884 he was appointed to the chair of Greek at the then Royal University of Ireland where he remained until his death in 1889.

What distinguishes Hopkins's poetry from that of his friends Coventry Patmore and Robert Bridges is his craftsmanship, or preoccupation with design, which not only caused him to create a new form of versification but also, as with Mallarmé and Eliot, made for much obscurity in his own work. "Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or *inscape*" (as he called it) "to be distinctive, and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped." But for all his surface "queerness", Hopkins has a lasting quality which rises above literary fashions as the man himself rose above the England of his day. Father Lahey's book, as any good presentation should, gives just enough of Hopkins's verse to whet the reader's appetite and leave him eager to discover for himself the more important poems.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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MY LIFE *by Leon Trotsky* (SCRIBNER'S. $5.00)

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW once called Trotsky the "prince of pamphleteers", but, even if shorn of its frequent contemptuous connotation, the name is unworthy the author of this book. In part this is personal history and in part an apology for and explanation of the rôle Trotsky is playing in Russian history. The first is a simple, sincere description of his life with his parents on their farm at Yanovka, of life with his cousins in their apartment in Odessa, of his education and initiation as a revolutionary. It gives picturesque accounts of his exiles in Siberia and one adventurous escape. The narrative is vivid, imaginative, full of acute observations of character and colorful description of people and places. Aiming at no effect, Trotsky contrives to paint a fine picture of an unfamiliar phase of Russian Jewish life. He is less happy when he turns apologist.

When Trotsky deals with Communist politics, particularly after the October revolution, his story is spoiled by the constant intrusion of his quarrel with Stalin. Testimonials from Lenin and others as to his own ability and caustic references to the "epigones of the revolution" mar what is otherwise valuable contemporary history. He may be quite right in describing Stalin as the "outstanding mediocrity of the revolution" and as a man who, though firm and practical, has a "narrow political horizon and exceptional moral coarseness and unscrupulousness". He may be right as a Communist in jeering at Stalin's rejection of internationalism in favor of "socialism in a single country". But it is hard to forget that Stalin is in power and Trotsky a dethroned dictator. What startles the reader is not so much the former's moral obliquity as the latter's complete blindness to the feelings and needs of the Russian people themselves. Russia is to Trotsky only the convenient platform, on which to demonstrate and from which to search the doctrine of Communism. Always, and at times consciously, he is the Jew, the true internationalist, the man without a homeland and now without "a visa on this planet". His roots are in his race, not in Russia, and all the love in this book is for his own people.

"Even in my early youth," he writes, "the national bias and national prejudices had only bewildered my sense of reason, in some cases stirring in me nothing but disdain and even a moral nausea. My Marxist education deepened this feeling and changed my attitude to that of active internationalism."

Trotsky's faith in militant Communism, the clarity with which he saw the issues facing it, the courage with which he fought for it, are in themselves matter for the highest admiration. His intellectual and personal bravery are equalled by his ability, which falls very little, if at all, short of genius. Few men in any age have turned with such ease and competency to the tasks of organizing a revolution, a military campaign, a demoralized army and a civil administration.

Trotsky is aware of the accidental quality of the Communist success, though he calls it "inspiration", not accident. "Revolution," he writes, "is the inspired frenzy of history." And he asks the reader to believe that the Bolsheviks "did no more than formulate what answered the requirements of the people and the demands of history". Elsewhere, however, he admits that the thread of history is often broken. "Then a new knot must be tied." But whether the knot which the Communists are tying will knit Russia's future with Russia's past with all that that would imply of continuing tradition and intellectual attainment or whether the past is to be discarded in favor of a robot-like industrialization program—that is a question that does not interest Trotsky. He cares only for Communism, not at all for the common people who are "too ignorant, too enslaved for me to be annoyed at them". His annoyance is directed only at the Communists, of whose ingratitude he has good reason to complain.

NORAH MEADE

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JOHN CHRISTIAN BACH *by Charles Sanford Terry* (OXFORD. $8.50)

THE commonplace that genius is not inherited is not sustained in the case of Johann Sebastian Bach. One of his sons, at least, Carl Philipp Emanuel, certainly possessed a modicum of his father's genius, while John Christian, whose biography Mr. Terry has just brought forth, had a talent great enough to influence Mozart. John Christian was the youngest of the great Bach's voluminous brood of sons and his career was the widest and in some respects the most successful of any of his family. A member of the Court of Frederick the Great, organist of Milan cathedral, a successful writer of opera in Italy, and finally after his installation in London succeeding Handel as music master to Queen Charlotte, in which office he held for years the most powerful position in English music, it is not to be wondered at that German critics have declared him a renegade and a man of the world rather than an artist. John Christian Bach was certainly a man of the world, but it is bitterly unjust to declare that he was traitorous to his art. He worked faithfully and produced much, and when his compositions are heard today their beauty and sincerity are always recognized. As Mr. Terry says, "His stature is not gigantic; but he was prominent and respected in his generation, a pioneer in the exploration of new idioms, and honored by the giants who perfected them. The man whose death Mozart deplored as a loss to the world of music may not be lightly belittled".

Mr. Terry's life is the painstaking work of a scholar. It makes no attempt at brilliancy but is content to set down the facts of John Christian's life and to draw from them their evident conclusions. Of more than ordinary value to the book are the voluminous excerpts from Bach's music given in the appendix. It is a work for scholars and for Bach enthusiasts.

GRENVILLE VERNON

THE BIOGRAPHY OF PRESIDENT VON HINDENBURG *by Rudolph Weterstetten and A. M. K. Watson* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

IT IS far too early to expect any final appraisal of the great rôle which Hindenburg has played in the history of his country. The task which he undertook when he accepted the presidency, putting aside every personal consideration at the altar of that stern daughter of the voice of God whom he has so inexorably obeyed throughout his long life, is not yet complete. He stands today as the one firm link which binds Republican Germany to Imperial Germany, but whether the unity for which he has labored will endure must be the final test of the significance of his life.

It is somewhat temerarious under these circumstances for Messrs. Weterstetten and Watson to attempt a definitive biography. On firm ground when they write of the military leader who won the battle of Tannenberg, thereby saving Prussia from Russian invasion, and who led Germany's armies back to the Fatherland in 1918, thereby saving his country from further revolutionary outbreaks, they are less convincing when they describe Hindenburg as president. There are too many quotations from his formal speeches, and too much detail on minor activities, entirely to hold the reader's interest.

Their book is, however, revelatory of the character of this stern, forbidding warrior who has become so greatly loved because of his simple, ingenuous virtues and almost childlike devotion to duty wherever that duty may lead him. Deep admiration for Hindenburg is clearly evident in this writing, but at the same time the authors have not shut their eyes to his narrow limitations. They paint the portrait of a man whose whole life was bound up in the army, whose entire loyalty was for his Kaiser and King, whose deepest pride was in the glory of the Empire, but whom fate destined to achieve his greatest honor as the President of a Republic erected on the

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ruins of the Empire which he had defended, with his Kaiser exiled and the armies he had commanded disarmed.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

EMERSON, THE ENRAPTURED YANKEE *by Régis Michaud* (HARPER'S. $4.00)

HERE is a tempting biography, the story of Emerson—that absolute archetype of everything Nordic, Protestant and Calvinist in the American culture—told by a shrewd, sensitive and witty Frenchman, Régis Michaud. As one might expect, M. Michaud has achieved an interesting point of view. He has stood outside that curious and strangely appealing phenomenon of our civilization which Mr. Gilbert Seldes dubbed "the stammering century", and has viewed it clearly and impartially. He is not polemic, nor amused, nor over-critical. His aim has been to understand, to analyze and evaluate those incorrigible New England idealists who founded the nation, the would-be poets and philosophers who discussed Kant and Coleridge, who planned Utopias, who dreamed of a return to the Golden Age by way of reforms and prohibitions, who ate unleavened bread and abjured alcohol, who called themselves Quakers or Unitarians, Perfectionists or Adventists or Quietists. This he has done admirably and sympathetically. He has given us with it a good and readable digest of Emerson's philosophy—of the progressive reflections which led him through the swaddling, artificial, repressed intellectuality of his youth, into the vigor and actuality, and the practical idealism of life.

M. Michaud has told us the story of the philosopher; but the story of the man, which should be inseparable from it, he has unhappily neglected. There are few indications, in the present volume, of those personal circumstances which conditioned Emerson's chilly aloofness, or of the bitter loneliness which finally undermined his rigid creed of self-sufficiency. Régis Michaud has brought to his biography no new material—or rather, it would be correct to say that he has brought to it no new and authentic material. He has, however, been guilty of a host of minor inaccuracies which undermine the effect of an otherwise conscientious piece of work. It may be mentioned, for example, that Margaret Fuller did not leave the staff of the New York *Tribune* to take over the editorship of *The Dial*, but that, on the contrary, it was the prestige of her work on the Transcendentalist organ which procured her the post as literary critic under Horace Greeley. Also, Brook Farm was not, as M. Michaud states, originally modelled upon the ideas of Fourier. Instead, it absorbed the "phalanx" notion only with its dying gasp. Finally, M. Michaud advances the wholly novel theory—a theory more than a little ridiculous in view of plain evidence to the contrary—that Margaret Fuller was a physically attractive woman, that there existed between her and Emerson a strongly sentimental attachment, and that, in fact, it was the redoubtable Margaret who "revealed to him the Eternal Feminine".

GEORGE ELIOT *by J. Lewis May* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $3.50)

BY MOST definitions, George Eliot is not a particularly fascinating subject for research. In spite of her unconventional connection with George Henry Lewes, it has always been difficult to imagine her clad in any other garb that the stiff hodden gray of respectable dulness. The daughter of a stalwart, amiable and uninteresting yeoman, Mary Ann Evans very early displayed those dusty qualities which Mr. May characterizes as the attributes of "the intellectual nouveau riche". Self-educated, and possessed of a vigorous but not very original mind, she could never resist the lure of priggish scholarship, and she had apparently found her métier in the composition of pedantic articles for the *Westminster Review*. In what we know of George Eliot, or in what Mr. May adduces

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here, there is little to explain the fact that she was a very warm and realistic interpreter of life. The creator of Mrs. Poyser, equally with the daring mistress of George Henry Lewes, remains a psychological mystery.

Lewes himself—the extraordinary, talented little mountebank who nurtured George Eliot's career—is by far the most attractive figure in Mr. May's narrow gallery. And if it would be interesting to know what George felt for Lewes, it would be at least twice as interesting to know what Lewes felt for George, and which one of the several possible motives induced him to attach himself to the formidable maiden of thirty-five summers who gave promise of such lucrative genius. Actually, Mr. May's biography adds little to our previous conception of George Eliot. But, if it inflicts upon us a good deal of dull narrative, it contains, at the same time, some very lively criticism of a highly debatable order. For the student of the Victorian novel, this volume will be of the keenest interest. But for those readers whose concern with George Eliot is still dormant, it is unlikely to resurrect her from the deepening shadows of personal oblivion.

THE COMPLETE JOURNAL OF TOWNSEND HARRIS (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $5.00)

As United States Consul General to Japan, Townsend Harris—a prominent merchant and one of the founders of the College of the City of New York—was the first diplomatic emissary of a civilized nation to enter that studiously barred and isolated island. His journal, laboriously annotated by Mario Emilio Cosenza and published here for the first time, is the record of his first two years in Japan and of his long and trying negotiations for the opening of Japan to foreign trade and travel. It is reasonable, from internal evidence, to suppose that Townsend Harris intended this journal for publication, that he planned it as a running commentary upon the important historical events with which he was intimately concerned and that he devised it to supplement his official records and to clarify his personal motives. If so, he was a man of remarkable ingenuity, candor and foresight. He has left us, in both its human and its historical aspects, an indispensable document.

When Townsend Harris landed at Shimoda in August, 1856, he approached one of the most extraordinary and difficult tasks which ever fell to the lot of a diplomat. He had to establish himself in a country very suspicious of foreigners and hostile to foreign influence, he had to secure favorable treaties from a court unwilling to treat, he had to maintain the dignity of his country, which was still regarded, in the affairs of Europe, as a second-rate power, and he had to do most of these things, in the entire absence of communications or instructions from home, by the exercise of his own unaided tact and courage and pertinacity. How well these tasks were accomplished, and how much his country owes to Townsend Harris, this journal amply testifies. He drew from his stay in Japan and from his unique position as the first foreigner successfully to intrude himself into the national life of the Japanese, many valuable and interesting facts, and his generalizations upon these facts are often extremely diverting. His journal is at once a document of great historical significance and an eminently readable and enjoyable narrative.

MARGARET WALLACE

HETTY GREEN, A WOMAN WHO LOVED MONEY *by Boyden Sparkes and Samuel Taylor Moore* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $5.00)

THE only lover that Hetty ever held to her heart was money. The adoration of it flowed through her veins—a cold, relentless passion. She was born of New Bedford Quaker stock, daughter of a rich whaling family and heiress to a large fortune. She had never in her

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life been subjected to even the slightest pinch of poverty, yet this hard-fisted child, at an age when other little girls were reading their fairy-tales, was possessed of but one dream—to become the richest woman in the world.

"My father," said Hetty, "taught me never to owe anyone anything, not even a kindness." Starting off with such grim advice, the long road of her life, strewn with pots of gold, never meandered into the meadows of emotion or sentiment. The Midas-hearted Hetty was own daughter to all the gods of parsimony, avarice and cunning, but she knew what she wanted and got it.

The Witch of Wall Street they called her. She had so magic a banking brain and was so conversant with the money-currents of the country that on one occasion when the Comptroller of the City of New York approached her for a loan she told him before he spoke just how many millions he would require.

Law suits, stupendous financial transactions, an ever-increasing fortune, a loveless marriage, five-cent tips to waitresses, quarrels with cooks, a will touching the higher mathematics but not bequeathing one cent to charity—these things are the blood and bone of the Sparkes-Moore book which has been rendered completely interesting, despite its flinty "heroine", by reason of its sense of proportion and the fine winds of humor which sweep through it.

THE RAVEN *by Marquis James* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $5.00)

WE HAD succumbed whole-heartedly to the fire and fascination of this biography of Sam Houston long before the book received the award of the Pulitzer 1930 Prize.

No life-story published in this country during the past year seemed to us to approach this volume in charm of subject, historical value, documentation, or in splendid panoramic effect. In addition, the style and tempo in which the narrative is presented fit the theme in a quite unusual manner. The writing, like the leading character of the book, is rugged and colorful, honest and dramatic, and at all times swiftly moving.

The days of Houston were days of action, not of psychological delvings, so it is entirely proper that this picture of him should be done in a broad, objective manner and not with a scalpel slipped continually under the skin—which is not by any means to suggest that one is not permitted to see the hidden springs of his emotions.

Mr. James has made no attempt to approach Houston as Maurois or Strachey would have approached him—though both of these men would have revelled in his romantic personality—but with an unfaltering instinct he has portrayed his man in a truly American spirit. He has gone with him in a sort of passionate companionship along that road which led from Virginia into the wilderness of Tennessee; along the mysterious trails that lured the restive boy Sam from a pioneer settlement to months of living among the Cherokees whose chief, Oo-loo-te-ga, gave him the name of The Raven. The picturesque customs of these Indians pleased Sam down to the bone, and "thirty-seven years later a man to whom few illusions remained, lingered over the memories of his youth in a Pan's garden".

Mr. James has given us a complete record of the man—as adventurer, dreamer, hero of the great Southwest. It was when Houston was in the midst of a tempestuous campaign for re-election as Governor of Tennessee that the mysterious private tragedy of his life fell upon him. He had married Miss Eliza Allen, daughter of a celebrated Cumberland Valley family. She was eighteen and he was thirty-five. Rumor had it that she was already in love, but was persuaded by her family to wed the devastatingly attractive young governor who, in the eyes of all, seemed destined to reach the White House before many years. Eleven short weeks after the wedding, Sam and his wife parted. A storm broke loose

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in Tennessee. A lady's honor was at stake—the career of a very great man and the future of a political party seemed about to topple. It is just here that Mr. James achieves a particularly noteworthy feeling of suspense and drama. Sam Houston exonerated the lady completely, but refused any explanation and made no attempt to justify himself. Resigning his office as Governor of Tennessee he vanished. It was a sensational disappearance. Leaving that civilization that had played so cruel a trick upon him he returned to the friends of his boyhood, the Cherokees, hiding his agony of spirit in four years of utter vagabondage.

These things are, of course, the property of the historian, as is the dark desperate Texan coup by which he is perhaps best known, but they are all painted with fresh colors by Mr. James. Always the dual elements of the man are apparent in his actions. He appears, according to this new portrait, to have done all the remarkable things that he did out of an inner urge. Invariably he looms larger than the event. To bring to life so Quixotic a figure, keeping him always this side of a fabulous creation, was no easy task. But Mr. James has pulled it off. He has given us a gorgeous historical document, as thrilling as any Dumas novel.

LYNN ANDERSON

ROGER WILLIAMS: PROPHET AND PIONEER *by Emily Easton* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $5.00)

ROGER WILLIAMS's advocacy of a conception of religious liberty more than one hundred years in advance of his time resulted in savage attacks on his credo and physical exile from even the few comforts of the Pilgrim settlements during his lifetime; now, two centuries and a half after his death, his beliefs form such a commonplace of government that it is difficult for a modern to realize the courage, the originality and the intellectual independence which their formulation required.

Emily Easton's greatest success in her biography of the "prophet" is, perhaps, in her resolution of this difficulty. A scholarly and copiously detailed picture of English life and of life in New England prefaces the entrance of Roger Williams to his own history. The author creates a sense of the thought-currents in an England more scholastic than the Scholastics; an England in which the commas in a paragraph of religious commentary aroused disputes as bitter and as real to the everyday life of the ordinary citizen as those aroused by the prohibition or tariff controversies among us today. Indeed the book is as much a history of England and of the New England colonies during the lifetime of Williams as it is a biography of the rebel.

Against the richly filled-in background, the life of Roger Williams and the incidents of his life assume the value and significance which a more dashing and less conscientious biographer would most certainly have lost. The exposition has more than enough motion to hold the reader's interest, but it is firmly kept to the ideas and appraisals of Roger Williams's time, and his acts and advocacies appear in fair and accurate proportions.

The other great merit of the book is its thorough objectivity. The author has painstakingly documented the whole text, and when she is, occasionally, forced to speak in her own person, her comments are almost cold. It is not a reflection of the author's admiration for Williams that one feels after finishing the biography; it is a true admiration, based on recorded actions and utterances of the man himself.

THOMAS CHATTERTON, THE MARVELOUS BOY *by Esther Parker Ellinger* (UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS. $2.00)

THOMAS CHATTERTON died by his own hand at the age of seventeen, leaving verse fragments of an antique beauty and some poetical satires into which he poured his hatred and contempt for those who had crossed

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him, especially those of his native city of Bristol. He began writing verse at the age of eleven. He tripped up a file of scholars by his Rowley poems, a pretended historical chronicle of Norman and Saxon days composed by himself in antique phraseology and on old parchment and passed off as the newly discovered work of a monkish poet-chronicler named Thomas Rowley.

Miss Ellinger's book is little more than an annotated brochure, to which is appended one of the marvelous boy's verse satires, "The Exhibition". The author attributes to these satires the keen verdicts of a Dryden and the bludgeon manners of a Churchill. The antique Rowley poems have been regarded as sufficient to preserve Chatterton's fame; Miss Ellinger asserts that even had those perished, the contemporary satires—"the marvelous boy" died in 1770—as surely would have preserved that fame. So that we have in Chatterton the spectacle of a seventeen-year-old boy's fame doubly preserved.

This commentator's chief contribution consists in presenting the plausible conclusion that Chatterton was not insane, as others have held, but a neurotic with an inferiority complex who sought an escape—which he found in the world of his imagined Rowley—and compensations in the pride and arrogance with which he excoriated his elders in his verse satires. "Not one of his remarkable traits but can be definitely associated with some neurotic abnormality, whether the characteristic is personal or literary."

HARRY SALPETER

LAUD, STORM CENTER OF STUART ENGLAND *by Robert P. Tristram Coffin* (BRENTANO. $3.50)

MR. COFFIN'S book, for all its fine writing, is rather distressing reading: the reason, obvious maladjustment of style and treatment to subject. Mr. Coffin is a poet as well as a professor, a lover of beautiful *things*, an esthete with a decided flair for the precious. Laud pitifully lacked poetry. As a preacher, he wanted utterly the rich, intricate sentences of Donne, Andrewes, Taylor: he wrote sermons, confesses Coffin, "like a carpenter". Let Coffin characterize him: "Untouched by mysticism, this man was no lover of an abstract emotionalism, no worshipper of mysteries, no dreamer prostrated before a spiritual loveliness. . . . For this man was first and last an organizer. As he was a prince, he was a prince of business men". The portrait is ampler in its dimensions, but the glimpse exhibits the inappropriateness of the subject to the languorous sweetness of the book, its fragrance of heliotrope and jasmine. Laud was, it is true, a stickler for ceremonial, but his insistence was motivated by a love of system and order and hierarchic gradation rather than by any turn of temperament properly to be termed ritualistic. To him neither the sensibility nor the mentality of the acolyte belonged.

In his defects and virtues, Laud parallels the present diocesan of New York. Like Dr. Manning, he was an executive of a somewhat ruthless but vigorous sort, unimaginative, yet earnest and sincere in the defence of what he conceived to be the Anglican position. But Laud wrote a remarkable book. His great *Conference with Fisher*, which Coffin barely mentions, is one of the best reasoned defences of the Anglican position, and remains a monument to the learning and judgment of a man who transcended the administrator.

In this book, especially in the "Epistle Dedicatory to the King", Laud's voice is heard to ring out resonantly and even with a certain largeness of utterance. "The Catholic Church of Christ," he tells us, "is neither Rome, nor a conventicle. Out of that there is no salvation. I easily confess it. But out of Rome there is, and out of a conventicle too; salvation is not shut up into such a narrow conclave. . . . I have endeavoured to lay open those wider gates of the Catholic Church confined to no age, time, or place; not knowing any bounds but that 'faith

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which was once'—and but once for all—'delivered to the saints'."

Coffin refers to none of the modern books on his subject. Hutton's book is still good, and J. B. Mozley's essay. In 1927 there appeared a sound monograph by Duncan-Jones. The recent rehabilitation of Laud really goes back some thirty years to Dr. S. R. Gardiner's refutation of Macaulay.

AUSTIN WARREN

ALEXANDER POPE *by Edith Sitwell* (COSMOPOLITAN. $4.00)

EVERY so often critics, flouting tradition, have come forward to extol Pope's verse; but Miss Sitwell is the first to extol both the poet and the man. For two centuries the reputation of the poet has shifted, now higher, now lower; but the reputation of the man has remained steadily bad. All the world remembers him as vain, unscrupulous, venemous and deceitful. Now comes Miss Sitwell to deny this and insist that Pope was not only one of our greatest poets, but also a lovable and generous man. It was his enemies who were villains: Dennis who taunted him with being a cripple, or Lady Mary who laughed in his face for making love to her. He himself was the most affectionate of sons, the most generous of friends, the most devoted of lovers; he was kind to animals, he adored his garden, he helped out needy authors, he bore endless suffering, he remained a loyal Catholic in the face of difficulties.

To an extent all these things are true, and it is time to do justice to a man whose character has long been attacked and denounced. He had good qualities and good impulses, however much they were distorted by his physical handicap and the unpopularity of his religious convictions, as well as his weakness for invective. But he was certainly not the creature of Miss Sitwell's panegyric, and nothing proves this more conclusively than Miss Sitwell's own biography. It is one long record of damning if involuntary admissions. Now Pope is up to a literary forgery, now he is maliciously heckling a publisher, now he takes, in verse, fiendish revenge on an enemy, now he reveals an inordinate craving for money. Never was a man less deterred by pride or good-nature or simple humanity from getting in the last word, and never was an old friend shown less quarter so soon as he became an enemy.

Miss Sitwell's fundamental error of treatment is this: she has tried to justify Pope's life on the basis of his deformed appearance, whereas that only explains it. Dennis's taunt, Lady Mary's laughter (if the story is true), and Martha Blount's failure to reciprocate his love must have had a profound effect upon Pope's character; and it is easy to understand how a naturally sentimental nature like Pope's swiftly reached the opposite extreme and became splenetic and unrestrainedly malicious. We can understand the man, we can sympathize with him; but unlike Miss Sitwell we cannot justify his conduct —or—even worse—deny its existence; and unlike Miss Sitwell, we cannot blacken a whole generation of names in order to vindicate Pope's. Her treatment of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, for example, is Popian in its viciousness and unfairness: the woman was hard as nails but no fiendlike virago; and any reader of her own letters to Pope must conclude that she aimed at striking a sane and tactful relationship.

Quite the worst of Miss Sitwell's sins is her tasteless use of a maudlin style whenever she wants to show how lovable a fellow Pope was: he is the "most dearly devoted of sons", the "most humbly devoted of lovers"; when his father died and left him money, "never was inheritance more wept over when it came". This is the more unfortunate because when Miss Sitwell writes without too big a bee in her bonnet she can be, as every one knows, brilliantly entertaining. Her pictures of Augustan London are sharp and vivid; her account of Pope's relations with Dean Swift is richly revealing and pointed; her

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portrait of the aged Wycherley is properly spirited. Her appraisal of Pope's verse leaves something to be desired: as professional analysis it is shrewd, but it never quits the small considerations of poetry for larger ones; and like Lytton Strachey before her, she is often more interested in ridiculing Arnold than in elucidating Pope. Still, one expects eccentricities like this from a Sitwell; they are flavorsome and can be lightly borne: it is in her interpretation of Pope himself that she has done real damage by making a cloudy issue cloudier. This is very unfortunate, because a good modern biography of Pope has been badly needed, and is now needed more badly than ever.

THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS: FRIEND OF POE *by S. Foster Damon.* (HARPERS. $5.00)

ONE man, sometimes, can single-handed revive a completely forgotten reputation: every one knows that Lamb rediscovered certain of the Elizabethans, that Mendelssohn rediscovered Bach. The game is fascinating enough to tempt us all: it has tempted Mr. Damon to sound the horn for Chivers. No one will deny that the Georgia poet, even among lovers of second-rate poetry, is quite forgotten: the only recent anthology I find including even one poem of his is Conrad Aiken's. But Mr. Damon thinks he has been done an injustice, that occasionally "he shot far higher than the world has ever realized" and that it is time for him to be read again.

Though he strikes us today as a curiosity, Thomas Holley Chivers was actually a type: a mystic swamped by the unnumbered cults of the first half of the nineteenth century, a sentimentalist of garish and overburdened imagination, a product of romanticism at its bursting point. Mr. Damon is impressed by his originality; I am struck by how like he is to other ultra-romantic poets with feverish imaginations. Mr. Damon never convinces me that Chivers has the great moments he attributes to him; at its best his work is merely grandiose; most of the time it is bad, and some of the time its bathos is appalling. Mr. Damon over-estimates him not only because he reads more into the man's work than is there, but also because he over-estimates the school of poetry to which he belongs. If we could call (as Mr. Damon does) Poe's "The Raven" a masterpiece, doubtless we could call a fair amount of Chivers good; but as "The Raven" is very far from a masterpiece, we must rank Chivers a good deal lower. The place that Mr. Damon assigns to Chivers in the world of poets is actually occupied by a man like Beddoes. Nor is he entitled to much importance as an influence on men like Poe, Swinburne and Rossetti. Swinburne read him indeed, but only to laugh at him. Poe praised him indeed, but Poe (though often a good critic) was by no means an infallible judge of verse: he thought Tennyson, for instance, unsurpassable. All in all Mr. Damon's scholarship is more to be commended than his literary judgment; and Chivers had better make the most of the present, for the future, like the past, is apt to prove unkind.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

GOLDRUSH DAYS WITH MARK TWAIN *by William R. Gillis* (BONI. $4.00)

THE days when Mark Twain worked as a newspaper man on the Virginia City *Enterprise* and San Francisco papers, and episodes of his life as a gold miner, when living on Jackass Hill with the Gillis brothers, are recalled in this book of sketches. Mr. Gillis does not attempt a chronological record, or a pretentious one; he relates the "good stories" he remembers of those days, the many practical jokes, some of them rather rough, his friends played on one another. The arrival of Bret Harte at Jim Gillis's cabin, in the midst of a winter storm, on his way to California with two dollars and fifty-three cents in his pocket, is one of the high spots of the record.

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It is amusing to learn that Mark Twain, like many practical jokers, did not enjoy a joke when the laugh was on himself. Mr. Gillis describes his hot-tempered reactions on various occasions when the "boys" made him the butt of their sense of humor. Rough and ready frontier gun-fighters, notorious gamblers, the Vigilantes, pocket-miners, saloon brawlers, the police who attempted to clean up the "Barbary Coast", and other factors of the life of the times make these personal sketches of early California very entertaining and interesting, and a valuable, if somewhat slight addition to Americana. Glintenkamp's woodcuts are faithful to the period, and are among the artist's best.

COLEY TAYLOR

AMIEL'S PHILINE *translated by Van Wyck Brooks* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

MR. BROOKS has done a beautiful translation of what is likely to be one of the most important books of the year. *Philine* is moving, terrifying, wearisome, annoying, difficult, pitiful, mean and sublime. It is a novel, a textbook, an autobiography, a chart. But all its varied and opposing qualities combine to make that one quality of wholeness which alone justifies the epithet "beautiful".

Amiel, the Geneva professor, and his enormous *Diary* have already assumed almost legendary proportions. Certain passages from the *Diary* were published in 1883, but all references to Philine, Amiel's mistress, were carefully omitted. The editors of this book have decided to work their way through the 16,900-page labyrinth once again, but this time with Philine as a clue, giving us all those passages which relate to her, together with the details which attend her entrances and exits but do not relate to her at all. The story of the affair is this: Amiel, aged thirty-nine and a virgin, meets an attractive widow of twenty-six. Date 1859. Acquaintance ripens into affection and affection into love. The inevitable consummation occurs, but only once. Thereafter, for eight years, their relations are purely platonic, until the widow presses for marriage. And Amiel refuses. And that is all.

What does Amiel make of Amiel the lover? He feared and hated physical love; he spent much of his time torturing his imagination with it. For him chastity was withdrawal and marriage the possibility of disappointment. Physical excitement meant the act of reading about it and the imaginative experience of *post actum omne animal triste*; and physical satisfaction the act of analyzing his disappointment with the one occasion on which he attempted it. What of Philine? She had the faults of a parasite and the virtues of a devotee, and she was badly treated; but if any justice is done to this unquestionably great book, she should attain something of Stella's pitiful immortality.

Yet, when all is said and done, it is Amiel the man and not Amiel the lover who makes the book a great one. It is the successful recognition of failure, the sublimation of mediocrity, which touches one so nearly. Here is Amiel, selfish, weak, a cold voluptuary, unable to take one definite step, fearful of happiness or success or ambition, spending his whole life in the admission that he was a failure, and rather a mean one at that. And there is Amiel, who, by the magnificence of his desire to know himself, by the labor and the triumph of his self-analysis, makes every vice a virtue, every weakness a strength, every backsliding an advance. For Amiel the dissector is so widely and so generously the victor of Amiel the dissected that there can hardly be a reader—granted the one quality of sensitivity—who will not at one time or another in this book meet himself face to face . . . a rare, a distressing, and a quite invaluable experience.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

BEAUTY: AN INTERPRETATION OF ART AND THE IMAGINATIVE LIFE *by Helen Huss Parkhurst* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $4.50)

A PRIMER OF AESTHETICS *by Louis Grudin* (COVICI, FRIEDE. $3.00)

IN HER rich and absorbing book Miss Parkhurst gives us not only an original simplification of esthetic theory but a piece of writing that is in itself a work of art, admirable in total structure and delightful in each detail. She is a philosophic thinker who can write—*rara avis in terra*—and it has seemed to her appropriate that a book about beauty should be beautiful. In order to write as well as she does one must have today, besides the hard-won skill, no little courageous independence of contemporary fashions in prose, and if we are to match her courage and skill among writers in her territory we must name no less a person than Santayana. There is no jargon in this book, no gratuitous obfuscation of problems already sufficiently dark by the use of a lingo peculiar to the writer; on the other hand, there is no "stepping-down" of high thought to the level of the million. Simply, the English language is masterfully used, in something like its full range of resources, as an instrument of expression always subtle and searching but always clear. Though not bedizened, the style is jewelled, yet it moves steadily and easily onward in every sentence. Language can be put to few more difficult tasks than this of discriminating precisely between effects of beauty and tracing them toward their source. On page after page of this book that task is performed triumphantly.

The triumph, however, is less one of style than of thought—of thought patient and accurate and sure that paces evenly on through the tangle of esthetic theories and through a wealth of illustrative materials drawn from all the arts to a conclusion both arresting and novel. This conclusion may be stated in the author's own words. She holds that "the crucial concept for the interpretation of all forms of art is that of metaphor", and metaphor itself she sees as "a creative synthesis of two ideas in which each is retained, but reborn, as it were, into a new estate and glorified by its garb of fresh and unforeseen significance". Such metaphor, though found in all the arts, is most pervading in music and architecture, the effects of which are due to their symbolizing "the old alternation between order and disorder, between the predictable and the unpredictable, the familiar and the unknown". The stupendous clash of these mighty opposites, she says, is in the universe itself, "and the function of art is to echo in its own terms this universal conflict. An imaginative invention cannot but be an image of man; but beyond that, and perhaps even more profoundly, it must be a recapitulation of the essential duality of existence of which the human organism is only one particular version. . . . Down to its uttermost parts but yet more fully in its magnificent completeness, a masterpiece of architecture or music is a synthesis of these seemingly irreconcilable tendencies which pervade all that is".

Rare and masterly books such as this—as remarkable for the knowledge and width of appreciation it reveals as for its thought, and as unusual in style as in either of these respects—too often fail of recognition because of the range of their excellence. The philosopher may neglect this book because he thinks

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it too literary, and literary persons may think it too philosophical. If so, both parties will miss one of the richest and ripest books that American scholarship has produced in recent years.

Mr. Grudin's *Primer of Aesthetics* is strangely named. One might reasonably expect a book of that title to be readable by a person of ordinary intelligence and to be concerned primarily with the problem of beauty. Both these expectations are here disappointed. In the few passages that are somewhat intelligible, and especially in his Definition of Poetry, Mr. Grudin seems to be following Croce, but elsewhere his main concern would appear to be that of out-Whiteheading Professor Whitehead. Some notion of his less perspicuous manner may be gained from this fairly typical sentence, chosen quite at random: "In merely identifying terms either as simples or as complexes, we are uncritical toward the identification, which itself remains an unqualified assertion of the form, 'this and that are "really" the same thing' ". The publishers assure us that "the *Primer* is free of the idiomatic allusiveness and philosophical vagueness usually associated with literary essays in philosophy". And indeed it is true that the style of the book seldom rises to vagueness—that is, to the faint and partial adumbration of significance. One cannot be sure, therefore, that it would not be well worth reading if translated into a language with which one was somewhat familiar.

ODELL SHEPARD

THE DANGER OF OBEDIENCE AND OTHER ESSAYS *by Harold J. Laski* (HARPERS. $3.00)

THESE ten essays, all of which have appeared in periodicals, are divided by subject matter into four groups: political theory, education, political portraits, and social theory. They are typical of Mr. Laski's work. They are written in a brilliant style; they repeat his usual political philosophy; they contain the clearest of ideas set in a murky background of first principles.

Just as Mr. Laski's chief power is the making of distinctions, so his greatest weakness is his failure to see those distinctions against certain basic facts of life as it is. He can, for instance, wisely observe that "In politics it is not only necessary to will what is right, but also to know what is right to will", and then two pages beyond write: "there is hardly a single certitude in the past which a wider and deeper experience has not rendered untenable"—which is acceptable only on the assumption of "progress" and a constantly changing human nature.

Politically Mr. Laski is a pluralist; he urges individual courage, suspicion and originality at the same time that he wants this individualism expressed in "interest-units", or professional groups, and the government to be decentralized. Disobedience to a government, he believes, is a measure of its own failure, and he fails constantly to distinguish between evils which spring from governments and evils which spring from the individual man.

Among Mr. Laski's three essays on education is that much admired one, "Teacher and Student", which is conceivably the finest, if the most ideal, statement of the classroom relationship that has been written in many years. His thesis there, so eloquently and discerningly written, is not new but it is entirely and rightly at variance with the present delusions of mass education. For once Mr. Laski pays tribute to the theory of the "great man" and recognizes that leadership is the real quality to look for in any educational process. But he does not see the leader's place in politics. There he talks about "interest-units" and the common good, without respect to the character or wisdom of the men who lead the groups.

In the political portrait of Rousseau, the author is again discriminatory but not judicial. The method is typical of Mr. Laski's thinking—vigorous, emphatic, decisive but

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uncentered, unorganized in its first principles. Rousseau, with faults and virtues, fascinates Mr. Laski. He is especially impressed with Jean-Jacques's vitality, power, persuasiveness and rich humanity. He sees, somewhat by choice, the collectivistic Rousseau, proponent of the general will, as the "enduring" Rousseau.

In the Machiavelli study Mr. Laski again shows his preference for the pluralistic view; for although he believes the Italian's cunning, unscrupulous man is as false as Rousseau's benevolent, sympathetic creature, still he maintains that man is the product of his surroundings and that political and economic inequality produces the Machiavellian and equality leads to the Rousseauistic. Either way the responsibility for human behavior is placed on society.

Mr. Laski's two essays on social theory, "A Plea for Equality" and "Can Business Be Civilized?", are his weakest. In the first of these we read much about the "common good" and about education, and too little about individual responsibility and human duties. To insinuate that lower class ideals spring from imitation of the luxury-loving, gaudy, and improvident upper crust is somewhat naïve. Man's desire for power, which in our day is chiefly the possession of money, resides in himself not in class imitation.

In "civilizing" business, Mr. Laski again sets up a social standard. He believes that rights accruing to ownership of private property must be conceived "in the terms of men's equal claim to the common good". He neglects to see that an individual with sound personal ends is worth more than he who tries to curb his *libido dominandi* by some thought of the common welfare. If he does not shortly forsake the social ideal, this individual will become either a reformer or a sentimental philanthropist. Neither is a solution of an unsound individualism.

In conclusion, it can be said that these essays, provocative as they are, contain dubious first principles—excepting of course those on teacher and student and on the American political system. Everything Mr. Laski writes is pleasant and easy to read. There is no fog in his rhetoric. Given his assumption, the rest emerges easily, thanks to a style as rhythmic as it is lucid.

Beyond that, we can only point out, Mr. Laski has erred chiefly in indifference to, certainly not ignorance of, those "eternal laws" which he professes to believe are "irrelevant to my argument".

LIBERTY *by Everett Dean Martin* (NORTON. $3.00)

ANY book that subjects so general and carelessly used a term as liberty to an Aristotelian examination is welcome in these days of inexact definition. In the present volume Mr. Martin has done just this and has made a strikingly valuable contribution to that growing body of criticism which is returning to a study of first principles.

The book proceeds on the plan of examining the three chief types of liberty as understood in the past: the Greek, which looked on freedom as a cultural achievement denied forever to the great masses of the people; the medieval, which was religious and took the form of submission to divine revelation; and the modern, which suffers the dilemma of trying to combine the substantial claims for freedom dating from the Renaissance with the Rousseauistic notion of liberty as the spontaneous gift of nature to be enjoyed as a natural heritage without reference to culture, restraint, or self-discipline.

Mr. Martin favors the Greek version of liberty because it seems to him nearer the facts of human nature and more vital and dynamic in life on the humanistic level. He admits willingly the valuable contribution that Catholic liberty made in saving the human spirit from the intolerance of decadent Rome. But toward the romantic and debatable liberty of our own day, Mr. Martin is severely denunciatory.

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A substantial and strongly phrased section of the book is devoted to an analysis of the current claim that law as such contains a moral obligation of obedience. With a dialectic which is little short of brilliant, Mr. Martin dissects this spurious claim and shows with all the clarity of the thinker who is right on first principles that there is no moral obligation for the civilized man to obey a bad law, despite the presumption that the uncultured, uncontrolled and unreasoning man must of necessity obey all law. The difference is that the reasoning and self-disciplined individual desires in himself to behave in accordance with those actions demanded by good laws.

Even if Mr. Martin trusts a bit too much to virtues alleged to accompany reason and therein repeats the Platonic paradox of identifying reason with virtue, he still manages to keep a clear sight on human nature at its best and to make the distinctions which show freedom as the achieved desire to do what is good and not as the spontaneous impulse to do what one wants.

There is some evidence in the book that Mr. Martin has been consorting too intimately with the Deists and also with the rationalistic ethics of Spinoza and the moonshine metaphysics of Kant. But with the reasonableness of Aristotle to steady him, he has come through with a sound and illuminating piece of critical writing.

The book should find a response among that saving remnant of civilized men in America who are struggling with a government and a public opinion frenziedly engaged in passing laws designed to govern the personal habits of its citizens.

In a country where personal responsibility is threatened with destruction by that mass opinion which enacts laws extending the domination of uplifters and others actuated by the lust of power, this book has an immediate and practical value, in addition to its deeper philosophical meaning.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

THE COURSE OF ENGLISH CLASSICISM *by Sherard Vines* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $1.25)

THE aim of this book is to trace the growth of classical principles in British art and to show that they endured after the Romantic Revival. This is surely an excellent aim, but although the underlying principles of classicism are definite, their permutations are numerous, and it is not easy to disentangle all of their implications. It would seem, then, that adequate definitions should be the first requisite especially when the aim is to show vestigial remains of a tradition in an unfriendly period. Professor Vines speaks throughout of classicism, which he never distinguishes from historic humanism, and although he utilizes Mr. Hulme's distinctions between static and dynamic classicism he does not tell us what they are. And since he calls baroque "classic" and since he says, "To create and criticize by rule is the procedure of the classicist", one is forced to conclude that what he means by classicism is mainly neo-classicism and pseudo-classicism. Furthermore, to indicate that Bacon and Hobbes had a few classical notions and so to claim them for your camp is to forget that it is the effect which an author produces and not the inaudible small voice within that is important.

The word "reason" is a slippery word which requires constant re-definition. Professor Vines uses it in two different meanings on succeeding pages with no distinctions. But his most glaring error is in his treatment of the sublime. He says, "Sublimity, like landscape, was admired throughout the most classical period in English art and is not a sign of 'romantic' decadence". And again, "The sublime, so much affected in Georgian times. . . ." In heaven's name what manner of sublime is this that can be "admired, like landscape" and "affected"? "It is a dreadful fallacy," says Professor Mather, "to assume that one can attain the sublime by intending

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it." What kind of fallacy would it be, I wonder, to assume that one could attain the sublime by "affecting" it? And finally, I present two of his judgments of the sort that brings down upon all classicists a condemnation merited by only a few. "It is, indeed, a perverse age that extols Hamlet and ignores Cato", and, "Pope is not merely a 'great poet', he is unfailingly efficient; he forgets, unlike Homer, Shakespeare, Shelley, or Browning, to nod". Over-zealousness is a quality that might well be left to the romantics.

POETRY AND POETS *by Amy Lowell* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.25)

SALVAGED from "a large amount of prose—some of it purely ephemeral and 'timely' in interest", this book sets forth, robustly, we are told, Miss Lowell's "considered opinions". Those opinions have a good deal of vigor and gusto and the book swings along at a lively pace in its rather snobbishly democratic way. The author was not afraid to cavil and she was quite undisturbed by "the hobgoblin of small minds". She seems to have entirely forgotten that even appreciative criticism must hang together. It would seem, for instance, that a person who recommends the study of the classics for "the perfectly valid reason" that they are difficult to master would not recommend, in the same essay, that, in order to rediscover the classics with delight, "An excellent way to begin would be to conduct a course upon living poets"; nor state, "I am firmly convinced that the poet must never respect tradition above his intuitive self". And one wonders how so robust an advocate of the humanities would defend their contemporary relevance when between the time of Whitman and Sandburg "a difference of sixty years. The world is no longer the same". "The power of judgment," says Miss Lowell, "is like water running up hill." Whatever that may mean, we may admit that for some, at least, it is difficult to achieve.

J. BRYAN ALLIN

THE GREEK WAY *by Edith Hamilton* (NORTON. $3.00)

IN a rather brief essay, Edith Hamilton presents an interpretation of the Greek way of thought and living. The effort is familiar but there is nothing pretentious in the essay and it is written with freshness and originality that rescue it from the scrap-heap. If the fleet and sometimes artificial style says less than it seems to say, it is because the interpretation proceeds not so much by studious comment upon Greek life and letters as by quick comparison of the ancient with the modern—in art, in writing, and in approach to the everlasting problems: by comparisons of W. S. Gilbert and Aristophanes, Shakespeare and Æschylus, Milton and Sophocles. The generalizations that introduce the argument are easy and right-sounding, but they are not established. The equally comprehensive conclusions are equally elusive. The use of undefined terms, as "mind" and "spirit", at important points in the essay is confusing. There is a felicitous grandeur in many of the book's principal statements: "That which distinguishes the modern world from the ancient . . . is the supremacy of mind in the affairs of men": "The Greeks were intellectualists": "In Greece the mind and the spirit met on equal terms": "For a hundred years Athens was a city where the great spiritual forces that were in men's minds flowed along together in peace".

It is inevitable that men, examining their own needs, should find in the Greeks "the stable, the permanent, the original human being". But that every tribute to the Greeks seems appropriate is dubious reward for their genius. Perhaps the familiar quotation should be changed to say, the Greeks should fear those who bear gifts. For our part, in any case, we are not greatly improved by every enthusiastic bit of praise that is offered the Greeks. *The Greek Way* can be enjoyed, but its chief value is in its incidental qualities. It is not destined to become a book of refer-

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ence, or a permanent contribution to our knowledge of the Greek genius. It is a wisely individual view of the serenely dead civilization that remains, for Edith Hamilton, inscrutably ideal.

CHARLES A. PEARCE

CONVENTION AND REVOLT IN POETRY by *John Livingston Lowes* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

SINCE 1919 Professor Lowes's Lowell Lectures have been through seven impressions and are now issued in a revised edition. Errors in the text have been corrected, the book is a trifle taller with more pleasing margins to the page, and it is bound in the appropriate crimson. Although written at a time when feelings aroused by what was then the New Poetry encouraged overstatement and when feelings aroused by the war made more than one philologist violently partisan, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* is today eminently restrained and readable.

The most admirable quality of the book is its wealth of illustration. Professor Lowes is not much concerned with first principles. Instead of attempting to analyze the faculty of poetic imagination he is content to use figures, like the loom, with which the poet weaves his tapestry, or the alembic, in which he distils his rare liquors. Professor Lowes brilliantly illustrates the fact that conventions, far from being static, are capable of being recreated and transmogrified in the poet's brain, but he does little to explain why one convention persists and why another fades away. The conclusion to his argument might well be "as we are now, so once were they", and "as they are now, so we shall be". Let it not be thought, however, that Professor Lowes views all things in the past and present as equally interesting and important. He juxtaposes, by his extraordinary ability of seeing associations in all he reads, a medieval hymn, Eustache Deschamps, Edgar Lee Masters and Villon, and, while pointing out how in all four the same device is used, shows that in one, Villon, the result is poetry.

The source-hunter used to be universally condemned except by the graduate schools. But when Professor Lowes published *The Road to Xanadu* he transformed source-hunting into something new—literary detective work, and, to quote one admirer, made "Sherlock Holmes look like a Chicago policeman". Using the conventional method of the literary historian in *Convention and Revolt*, but using it to his own purpose, he enriches many poems and poetic ventures by showing how much there is behind them. Incidentally by writing in a highly allusive style he has made a book which would require of another literary detective much learning and patience to track down his every reference and allusion.

THEODORE BAIRD

THE DONNE TRADITION *by George Williamson* (HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.00)

CONTEMPORARY interest in Donne and his school appears to stem from Grierson and T. S. Eliot: the union of scholarship, criticism and poetry is a happy augury. Grierson's scholarship has been augmented by the resources of Mario Praz, Pierre Legouis, Miss Ramsay, Mrs. Simpson, and Professor Bredvold; Eliot's criticism has been rehearsed if not developed by John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson in *Fugitive*, by Herbert Read, by Genevieve Taggard.

Mr. Williamson mixes the scholar and the critic and yields homage both to Grierson and to Eliot. Yet the critic easily predominates over the doctor; and, like Ransom and Davidson, the author of *The Donne Tradition* comes to his view by way of Mr. Eliot's poetry and Mr. Eliot's criticism. "This book was really begun in a small essay on 'The Talent of T. S. Eliot', which appeared in *The Sewanee Review* [July, 1927]. There I urged the relationship of Eliot to Donne, only to find myself beguiled into larger speculations. . . . But my debt to Mr. Eliot

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goes beyond enticement. His critical thinking on the 'metaphysical poets' has so influenced my own that I can only express my deep obligation to him, without trying to define its limits." Mr. Eliot read—and, one supposes, endorsed—a part of the manuscript.

It is no disparagement of Mr. Williamson's parts to say that his prefatory confession is true: critically, the book but amplifies, develops, applies some brilliant passages from those brief and tremendously influential essays of Mr. Eliot. "The Metaphysical Poets" and "Andrew Marvell", in *Homage to John Dryden* (1924), have been followed by notes on Donne, Crashaw, and Vaughan. The preface to *Lancelot Andrewes* announces that its author has in preparation a small volume on *The School of Donne*.

Eliot charges that something "had happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose". To Donne "Thought is an intense feeling which is one with every other feeling". This union of sensibility and passion with cerebration constitutes the great glory of Donne and his school. Since the seventeenth century, poets have "thought and felt by fits, unbalanced"; then, they were intellectual without sacrifice of passion, and passionate without diminution of thought.

This is Eliot's brilliant analysis of Donne and his genius; and this analysis Williamson adopts and applies—to Donne, to Chapman, to the "Sacred Line" (Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan), to the "Profane Line" (Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Bishop King, Marvell, Aurelian Townshend), to the "Chief Offenders" (Cleveland, Benlowes, Cowley), to the "Fringe of the Tradition". The book concludes with a chapter on Dryden in his relation to Donne, and a valedictory—"Short View of the Tradition".

It is always a temptation to cry up one school of poetry by crying down another, as the redoubtable Sitwell has recently felt it necessary to canonize Pope through excommunicating Arnold. Mr. Williamson is too judicial for so facile a course. Donne finds celebration through no sneer at Pope on the one hand or Wordsworth and Tennyson on the other. Again, Williamson does not seek to exalt the "metaphysical" sort of poetry as either the only sort worthy the name (as critics have often defined poetry so as to exclude Pope's) or as always equally and evenly felicitous.

The reader who expects to be taught to find beauty or significance in the most remote or strained metaphors of Donne's school will be disappointed. Williamson quotes constantly in behalf of the rich intensity of the tradition at its best; but his quotations are from the poems in the tradition with which the literati are already familiar, not from some recondite elegy which is Williamson's own discovery and property. We were ready to admire "The Definition of Love", "To his Coy Mistress", "The Exequy", "The Relique" before we had read this book; and Williamson exacts no further toll.

We are not, Williamson thinks, to value the metaphysicals for their being "witty, quaint, or obscure". He iterates, and reiterates, "We shall do the Donne tradition greater justice if we cease to judge it by its defects, or like it for them, and judge it instead by the normal standards of poetry". I am not sure what these normal standards are, and I do not recall that Williamson anywhere gives them explicitness; but I am grateful for the moderation with which he puts the claim of Donne as well as for the critical discernment with which he recognizes the very great importance of that claim.

AUSTIN WARREN

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A VARIED SHELF

A CENTURY OF ANGLO-CATHOLICISM *by Herbert Leslie Stewart* (OXFORD. $3.00)

THE TITLE of this book will scare away many readers who would readily bite at "A Century," let's say, "of Evolutionism". But a reader who is free to be caught by any good book will find here a distinguished example of modern critical history. It is at once scholarly and delightful, gravely felt and witty. The author appreciates the wit that is in other men and has a fine art of quotation. Above all he has fully realized the dramatic nature of his subject. This could not be done by a devotee either of modern Catholicism or of modern naturalism. Mr. Stewart is neither. He has the good fortune (for present purposes) of being "a Presbyterian born and bred" and professor of philosophy in Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. From this chair, near but not too near the stage, he has watched with canny eye the play of religious life and thought in modern England. And now he shows us that the Anglo-Catholic Movement is a highly dramatic story—an intensely human "evolution" that rose in the midst of a century of inhuman evolutionism.

When the thing began in Oxford a hundred years ago it appeared to the outside world absurdly antiquated in its ideas and flatly impracticable in its program. The second point seemed fully proven when "the Oxford Movement" was deserted by the most gifted of its founders, Newman, who entered the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. How many causes have survived, or could survive, such a blow as this? But the Movement flourished more and more. Today, says Mr. Stewart, the Anglo-Catholics have practically captured "the machine" of the Church of England. "Most of the theological colleges are in their hands, so that with them rests the training of the bulk of the clergy." Their voice is dominant in ecclesiastic assemblies. They are definitely opposed by only four of the forty-three bishops. Their revision of the Prayer-Book in 1928, though rejected by Parliament, is practically in force. Moreover, their line has gone forth throughout the earth, though Mr. Stewart does not say so. He ought to insert a chapter on Anglo-Catholicism in America and in the mission fields.

His main concern, however, is with Anglo-Catholic ideas, which so far have been shaped almost entirely in England. His method is to let the champions and opponents of the Movement speak for themselves in order, adding in each case his own appraisal. One moment he appears as advocate and the next as adversary. At times this continual shift of rôles is rendered nonplussing by the author's Scotch habit of reserving his own deepest convictions. At other times his insights are somewhat blunted by his prejudices. On the whole, however, his grasp and his charity are extraordinary. He helps to realize the hope to which he alludes with characteristic irony in these words: "Religious disputes are notoriously among the most obstinate; and yet, one should not take for granted that the healing hand of charity must for ever fail in just that quarter where the praise of charity is most frequent". As this sentence suggests, Mr. Stewart is free from the modern error of underestimating the difficulty of true charity. But he sees that honest men "are more united by their common truthfulness than divided by their disagreement about

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what things are true". And his book demonstrates that real religious charity, as distinguished from humanitarian emotion, may be advanced by a clear-cut opposition of differing religious ideas.

He declares he "cannot even faintly share much of the creed which Anglo-Catholics hold most precious". Yet he finds that their leaders as a group are the strongest exponents of religious truth today. By tracing Anglo-Catholic ideas through the three chief literary manifestos of the Movement—the *Tracts* of the 1830's, the *Lux Mundi* of 1889, and the *Essays Catholic and Critical* of 1926—he brings out the amazingly quick and rich development of thought that culminates in the last-named volume. As a reader of this volume, I can testify that Mr. Stewart has not overpraised it. Recently England has been comparatively undistinguished in literary and humanistic criticism. But in critical religious thinking she has decisively taken the lead through the work of Von Hügel and the *Essays Catholic and Critical*. This volume, with all its faults, is unrivalled in its combination of the latest scientific knowledge with the best of religious tradition. In other words the Anglo-Catholic Movement has justified itself intellectually as well as practically.

In the practices of the Anglo-Catholic rank and file Mr. Stewart finds and stigmatizes dark errors—arrogance, equivocation, ritualistic sentimentality, and superstition verging on idolatry. But his arraignment of modern Protestantism is far more severe. "Casuistry did not cease to be dangerous," he says, "when it became Protestant." Under the pretence of progressiveness, especially in the United States, Protestantism has cringed in countless ways to the fashions of the age and of the world. For one thing, "morality must be smuggled into legislation under the disguise of purposes more attractive than the moral". Protestant casuistry has become deadly for the life of the Kingdom that is not of this world. The Anglo-Catholics are reproached "for turning the Church into an idol" by those who "have turned it rather into a social dodge".

Mr. Stewart is quite convincing in his argument that the Anglican Church, avoiding the mistake she made regarding Methodism in the eighteenth century, should do everything in her power to keep the Anglo-Catholics within her fold. As a schismatic body, they would inbreed their errors and eccentricities, and their spiritual and moral power would be much less available for the Christian Church at large. Within the Anglican communion, moreover, they have created "a place for that sort of worshipper not to be classed as either Protestant or Catholic—the sort for whom Romanism is impossible, the old Evangelicalism is absurd, and the new Modernism is no more than an intellectual exercise, but upon whom the historic Faith has none the less laid hold, and for whom the very heart of this is in the symbolism of the Altar".

G. R. ELLIOTT

MACHINE MADE MAN *by Silas Bent* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $3.00)

MR. BENT has written in this volume a racy outline of man's development with the aid of the machine in various social, physical and economic aspects of civilization. In the main text of the book he merely sets forth the changes from hides to rayon and from bamboo pens to rotary presses with strict adherence to factual knowledge. But in his preface and in his conclusion he attempts to evaluate this mechanization which numerous writers during the past ten years have been deploring. Hence, for those who are interested in the results of Mr. Bent's study of our machine "progress", the less descriptive sections of the book will be the most important.

The author confesses that when he began his investigations he felt some doubt about the ends to which this roaring machine age was leading. But when he completed his

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work he felt almost optimistic. At the same time that he admits modern genius has not, in many cases, "evolved the instrumentalities of social control for these fabulous forces", still, he believes the cure for the evils of technology is more technology, and that the machine age has made the wisdom of Socrates available to all. For this association of laboratory knowledge with the wisdom of Socrates, we can see no justification. Mr. Bent, for all his journalistic scepticism, has been dazzled by the brilliance of engineers and inventors and has forgotten the source of Plato's wisdom. Socrates would never have said, as does Mr. Bent, that a nation busy building skyscrapers, airplanes and chemical plants will have little energy for a war of aggrandizement. Our spirit of imperialism and sentimental philanthropy would have impressed Socrates as being suited for war, and such has been the judgment of history.

But Mr. Bent is optimistic amid the tortured strivings of modern life. He says with all the naïve confidence of the engineer and the science-intoxicated philosopher that "the next generation will master the evils which now so confuse us, and will live, after all, the richest and fullest life this planet has seen".

If Mr. Bent had contented himself with a simple outline of man's physical developments, he would have written a book to be read by those who do not have time for arduous study; but his interpretations of these changes and developments are open to the severest criticism, whatever refuge he and the other utilitarians may take in that "vast and windy abode"—the future.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

THE LORE OF THE UNICORN *by Odell Shepard* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $6.50)

AN ESSAY on Hobby Horses in his *Joys of Forgetting* apprized us that Mr. Shepard was studying the rise and fall of the unicorn; but one does not take too seriously the promises of the familiar essayist and is, in consequence, duly enough surprised at the appearance of this portentous red and gold tome. Surprised and charmed. Shepard has achieved a very real triumph in a work which is almost, for our day, *sui generis*. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* comes to mind as nearest of kin, for Shepard has achieved a work of vast learning which is at the same time perfectly subservient to more humane purposes. In *The Lore of the Unicorn*, poetry and philosophy sit canopied above the elephant of erudition.

The "curious" book appears, curiously, to be the by-product of a year or two's tenure of a Guggenheim fellowship, devoted to the study of Solitude from Petrarch on. But one would be credulous to trust the preface too far. At any rate, here are these delicious pages, dedicated, characteristically, "To the memory of my friend, Frederic Walton Carpenter, who loved all animals, real and imaginary".

Few belletristic readers will traverse this whole expanse of erudition; one wonders a little who will: the gracious author admits that he has led us into a "footpath far . . . from any of the highways of contemporary research". This is a book which invites to dipping. The continuity is not of moment, any more than in Burton. Yet everywhere, as in Burton, persons with that perverse and futile greed for learning which lingers on here and there even today will find much that is variously interesting. Shepard is never dull, never arid, never slovenly of style.

How far the fun of accumulating useless and extravagant learning was the author's purpose, how far the extracting from it all of some distilled "significance", I find myself unable to say. Shepard is a mild, tolerant, sweet-tempered sort of philosopher; and he professes, in his concluding "Reflections", to have written for the purpose of reflecting. I do not wholly believe him.

Nevertheless, the "Reflections" are very charming. Shepard has read Matthew Arnold and Santayana, and from these mentors he has derived a view of life which combines

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judgment and unpretentious "emancipation" with the wistful retrospection becoming in a poet. The legend of the unicorn "illustrates", says our author, "Auguste Comte's three stages of intellectual 'progress': the theological, the metaphysical and the positivistic". The positivistic temper, which Shepard regretfully holds in common with his less imaginative contemporaries, has put an end to the unicorn; or, perhaps we should say, has denied him a beginning. But the dubiety of the boon impresses Shepard. The positivistic temper "has indeed brought us many advantages that no sensible man would forgo, but it has not been good for unicorns or for the many holy and beautiful things that unicorns may be said to represent. There are some quite sober moods in which one may sum up all the unquestionable advantages of modernity and calmly decide that he would 'rather be a pagan suckled in a creed outworn'. Or, for that matter, a Christian of the ages when that name still connoted a rich and sufficient and poetic faith".

Do we have to choose, Shepard wonders, between Rome and reason, "between a docile and unquestioning acceptance of authority on the one hand and a world of physicists and mathematicians on the other"? With Arnold and Santayana, the questioner takes refuge in the conception of a religion which gives symbolic expression, not to some alleged facts of history, but to human needs and human hopes: "the decline of the unicorn began with the affirmation that the animal must exist in nature, and just so . . . religion is declining because it has based its claim upon fact, or supposed fact, which is now crumbling. Our best hope seems to be in the faith expressed by Arnold himself that in the years coming on poetry will be an even surer and surer stay".

Shepard lays no claim to being a "new" humanist, but he is a humanist of a very old and gracious sort after all; and his beautiful book recalls to one's mind Pater's words at the end of the "Pico della Mirandola": "For the essence of humanism is that belief . . . that nothing which has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality—no language they have spoken, nor oracle beside which they have hushed their voices, no dream which has once been entertained by actual human minds, nothing about which they have ever been passionate, or expended time and zeal".

The Lore of the Unicorn really succeeds in humanizing learning.

AUSTIN WARREN

WHEN THE WEST IS GONE *by Frederic L. Paxson* (HOLT. $2.00)

PROFESSOR PAXSON is the successor to Professor Turner as the historian of the American frontier, and in this provocative little book, comprising the Colver lectures of 1929, he has posed some interesting questions as to the influence of the frontier spirit now that the West is gone. Its able and fascinating summary of the part which the frontier has played in the development of American institutions thus serves as an introduction for a discussion of whether the disappearance of that unique force in our history points to our complete assimilation into the civilization of the Western world, or whether some survival of the frontier spirit will continue to give to America a national character peculiar to itself.

Professor Paxson takes up two of the major problems of the modern world—the relation between the industrial state and the proletariat that industry has created, and the habit of accumulated capital to project itself in an imperial fashion—and in both instances professes to believe that we may reach a happy solution of these questions as a consequence of our frontier life.

Because of the opportunities which were offered by the new West and the hope they implanted in society "more generally than had ever been possible among the common people of the races from whom we have sprung", the author finds that we have no

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proletariat in the European sense of the world and no real class warfare. Because of the clash between frontier forces and those of accommodation to world conditions, he finds our foreign policy unsettled and erratic. Nevertheless, he is hopeful that our experience with debtor-creditor conflicts and with federal development may make us capable "of resuming a leadership whose conscious goal shall be the reduction of national ambitions, including our own, to a reign of reasonable law, interpreted by honourable courts, directed and controlled by a spirit of democratic life".

It is perhaps laying too much emphasis upon the last few pages of Professor Paxson's book to cite this excursion into the field of prophecy where the author himself declares he moves with hesitation "and none need follow me". But it is indicative of the way he interprets the influence of the frontier on matters which are commonly never associated with it. For anyone interested in analyzing or attempting to understand the forces which go to make up our national temperament and thus direct our national destiny, this study of the frontier spirit may be recommended with enthusiasm.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

WHO MOVED THE STONE? *by Frank Morison* (CENTURY. $2.50)

THERE is gripping power in this book. In a very simple and very original way it furnishes a convincing assurance

> That Life is ever Lord of Death
> And Love can never lose its own.

The argument carries home, because it is not a frigid discussion of a theological formula nor a spectacular display of critical dexterity, but a plain record of certain facts which revolutionized the mental attitude of the author. It has the accent of a companionable fireside talk. The story of the first Easter morning is told by one who relates that when, in his early manhood, he recited the creedal declaration that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried", it was his habit at this point to "stop dead, to set my teeth tightly, and refuse to utter another word". But he ordered his thinking by obedience to Emerson's injunction, "Hug the fact". Intellectual honesty compelled him to take the position: "It is easy to say that you will believe nothing that will not fit into the mould of a rationalist conception of the universe. But suppose the facts won't fit into that mould? The utmost an honest man can do is to undertake to examine the facts patiently and impartially, and to see where they will lead him". They led him to accept as splendidly true what he had deemed to be absolutely incredible. The dynamic facts whose impact produced so astonishing a revolution of belief are set forth in his book. With candor, with acuteness, with utter absence of bias, with no undertone of propaganda, without the glamour of rhetoric and with none of the debater's ambition to "score a point", the circumstances connected with the resurrection of Jesus are marshalled in their entirety, analyzed with judicial impartiality, allowed to shine in the clear white light of their historic actuality, until with irresistible compulsion they drive the open-minded thinker up to the very threshold of a Tomb where death had been discrowned.

The subtle skill with which the psychology of the situation at Jerusalem is interpreted, hour by hour and person by person, throughout the time which intervened between the Gethsemane arrest at midnight and the sunrise visit of the women to the Tomb, is akin to that which read the riddle of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter". The appellation "Frank Morison" is a literary disguise for an English writer. If this answer of his to that question of questions, "Who Moved the Stone?" had appeared about the middle of the nineteenth century, it would have been instantly and instinctively assumed that his real name was

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Edgar Allan Poe. From the moment that the major clue is unearthed—to wit, the basic charge in the indictment of Jesus that he had frequently used the phrase "three days" in a sense which rendered him liable to be put to death both as a sorcerer and a blasphemer—the circumstances mobilize and march, by their own inherent psychological necessity, unswervingly and inevitably, on and on, until they deploy before a conquered Tomb with this blazon upon their banners, "The third day He arose again from the dead".

This is a rare book. It illuminates the central mystery of existence. He is not to be envied who can read it without a thrill. For those who have not beforehand committed themselves to a refusal to believe, it kindles a beacon of eternal hope.

HOWARD DUFFIELD

THE CRITICAL YEAR *by Howard K. Beale* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.75)

THE assistant professor of history in Bowdoin College has added another volume to the considerable number issued of late dealing with Reconstruction and endeavoring to furbish up Andrew Johnson, who of all presidents drew the least reputation from the office. The author really tells his whole story in these compact observations: "He was the nominal head of a party of which he was not a member, and to whose machinery his enemies held the keys. In a country controlled by victorious Northerners, his Southern origin and training made his successful execution of any policy as impossible as it made his formation of a wise one feasible. Accident of war had thrown him into the vice-presidency and a second chance into the executive chair at the head of a Northern party, in which men like Stevens and Sumner were his lieutenants and New England abolitionists a power. His leadership of this party was obviously impossible". Professor Beale refrains from naming the party which, at the moment, was a bit difficult to specify. Johnson had been nominated along with Lincoln by a "Union" party. The crowd he was in conflict with revived the Republican party of 1856 and 1860. Herein lay the crux. The "Union" party idea was thrown into the discard and something partisan and corrupt came in its stead. The reconstruction of the Republican party was placed in front of the reconstruction of the Union. Tragedies followed and with them the wreck of Andrew Johnson's administration. The book deals only with the beginnings of the mess, covering the period between the death of Lincoln and the election of 1866, which brought with it a congressional majority hostile to the President, making the remainder of his stay hopeless so far as accomplishment went. Professor Beale would put some of the situation upon economics but his logic fails to hold. The purchase of a protective tariff by Northern industries followed the Reconstruction disturbances when it was found that the Negro vote in the South was not to be permitted to remain a Republican asset. The dollars of the manufacturers then became the backbone of the party. Much intelligent research and correctness in conclusions are shown. Also too great a preponderance of foot-notes.

DON C. SEITZ

THE DRAMA IN ENGLISH *by Walter Pritchard Eaton* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.00)

THE ONE ACT PLAY *by Marvin Theodore Herrick* (UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS. $.60)

A TEXT-BOOK on the evolution of the English and American theatre, *The Drama in English* covers about one thousand years of the drama considered as a living entity, placing particular stress on the physical aspect of playhouses at successive periods, and their resultant influence on dramatic construction.

Mr. Eaton's research into the development of the theatre and his deductions therefrom are of considerable interest and constitute the

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chief merit of the book. He traces the progress of the acted play through the earliest representations of "Mysteries" first as part of ritual within the church, and later staged on the steps outside; through "Moralities" given at fairs, in market places and at street corners, and the more secular "Interludes" played on wagons; through the Elizabethan theatre, built like an inn-yard with galleries, pit and jutting-out stage; through the picture-stage with scenic effects, borrowed from the Court Masques, and, finally, the proscenium arch; through the little houses of the Restoration, and the enormous, dimly-lit theatres of the eighteenth century and half of the nineteenth, to the intimate playhouse again in the late nineteenth and twentieth; culminating in our own modern theatres, equipped at all points to meet the demands of contemporary plays and playgoers.

Sufficient history is introduced to illuminate the trends of the various epochs, the temper of audiences and the place of dramatists in society; and representative plays are carefully analyzed for plot, construction, style, characterization and historical significance.

Some irrelevant emphasis is placed on the economic aspect, since playwriting is an art, not a business, and the book is strewn with questionable generalizations. Mr. Eaton is complacent as to the intellectual renascence of the theatre of late years and impressed by the intelligent demands of modern audiences. It can only be by a giant effort of will that so acute a student of men and plays refuses to see that, no matter in what age, an audience can be carried away by any illusion and any technique if they are sufficiently well done; and that, so far as the re-birth of the drama goes, for all the sunburst of Shaw and the Independent Theatre, our leading dramatists are lost in fatiguing mazes, and the puppets of the well-made play have merely given place to those of the pseudo-psychologists.

Mr. Herrick's ten radio talks on *The One Act Play* explore foreign fields and profitably display the contribution of Scandinavia, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy and Russia to the theatre of to-day.

In examining the dramatic scope and structural flexibility of the one-act play, as seen at its greatest in the varied excellence of Strindberg, Maeterlinck, Synge, Schnitzler and O'Neill, Mr. Herrick demonstrates that the one-act play is not a truncated three-act play, on which to cut the playwriting teeth, but a form complete in itself and capable of reaching the heights of comedic perfection or tragic power.

OLGA KATZIN

THE LOVE LETTERS OF ERNST HAECKEL *arranged by Johannes Werner* (HARPERS. $3.00)

ERNST HAECKEL was nearing sixty-five and Franziska von Altenhausen was thirty when she wrote the letter that was to result in the charming and tragic correspondence now so excellently edited for the first time. A new world had arisen for her as a result of reading the great naturalist's work. She lived in a lonely, old castle with aristocratic and orthodox relatives, to whom he would be but a "middle-class atheist". She aspired to his mental milieu. Would he help her reach it? Haeckel responded readily. He lived in an unhappy home, headed by a neurasthenic, invalid wife. Eventually the two met. Passion flared, and the "old Faust" grew young again. But Franziska was no Marguerite. She admitted that she loved him, but she had standards, by which she lived. He agreed to abide by them. She was a "sweet, radiant fairy who brings fragrant blossoms to the dungeon of a poor, lonely captive", but he was a "sensual realist", he confessed. It was impossible for him to visit her as she suggested and not make love to her. "With this emotional vitality I am to sit, quiet and cool, beside an adorable girl who loves me ardently, and in whom I find embodied all the charms of sweet womanhood—impos-

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sible!" He travels to forget her, and fails. For the first time his work does not comfort him. She admonishes him. For all her outward appearance of a *femme vierge*, she suffers from the fire burning beneath the quiet surface. "Landgrave, grow hard," she scolds him. And again, "Head high, my darling". Her family are alarmed, but there is no need. The wife whose death seemed imminent at one time continues to thrive. It is Franziska who dies, and Haeckel himself survives her by sixteen years.

The letters are a very beautiful revelation of two characters whose story as told by themselves suggests somehow an old and fine German fairy-tale.

NORAH MEADE

THE GREAT ASTRONOMERS *by Henry Smith Williams* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $6.00)

FOR one seeking a résumé of the achievements of astronomical science from the earliest days to the present time, *The Great Astronomers*, by Henry Smith Williams, presents a comprehensive and illuminating account.

By means of a considerably extended prologue the book takes the reader on a survey cruise of the universe as conceived by modern astronomy. During this sojourn of the imagination, fleeting glances are presented of the leading objects of interest in the whole galactic system and beyond. Turning breathless from this sky-raising stunt, the reader finds his imagination stimulated, but is quite as likely to experience fatigue as the sightseer returning from a Round-the-World Cruise where, in the space of three months, he has made momentary contacts with the great wonders of the world. After such a survey the various feats of astronomy from Eratosthenes to Shapley are covered in chronological order with scarcely a single major achievement unchronicled. As a biographical record of the great astronomers certainly no single volume of recent times is so complete.

While the style of the book is distinctly popular, the treatment of the considerable amount of material involved suggests here and there little more than text-book information. The reader of modern biography is tempted to wish that some of the profusion of details had been sacrificed in the interest of a bolder presentation of the character of these watchers of the sky. Fortunately some extraneous and more technical matters have been relegated to the appendix, for such lay readers as have adopted astronomy as a more or less serious hobby.

The author himself, who is a physician and in no sense an astronomer, has shown through prolific writings on science a wide acquaintance with current thought. His versatility is further exhibited in his pen sketchings, which add a wealth of illustrative material to the volume. An astronomer, however, feels somewhat reluctant to become enthusiastic over the sacrifice of some of the most exquisite achievements of celestial photography at the altar of modern art in the attempt to portray with the quill such celestial objects as nebulae and star clouds. Otherwise the volume is beyond criticism as the product of the book-maker's art.

HARLAN TRUE STETSON

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FLEDGLING FICTION

PERSONALITY STEPS IN

No one, I suspect, who reviews books either for a living or from a harmless desire to play oracle upon matters of taste, ever wholly detaches himself from some form of bondage to the personality of writers. I do not speak now of the corruption of the judgment by the words of a familiar personality. Friendship and enmity have an insidious way of adding their irrelevant values to a piece of writing, so that too often—although by no means so frequently as some persons think—is my friend's book a good book and my enemy's anathema. People who write about writing know well enough this weakness of the flesh and combat it with, I think, reasonable success. Indeed, on this count, legends have grown up: witness the fable of the criticaster who, detaching himself from the embraces of his beloved, cried out in magnificent despair, "Darling, you are the world's worst poet!"—and so went out of her life.

But I was thinking of a more subtle kind of onslaught which the writer makes on one's integrity. Some unknown has written a book; it comes to you new-made, unheralded, with only the jacket's blurb and its own merits to commend it. But let you sit down to read it and before a dozen leaves have been turned, out pops the author from behind an inky curtain of words, to say in the most impudent fashion: "Yes, but what about me? Forget my book; it is of no moment. Here am I, the Author, and how do you like me?" When such an intrusion occurs, if you happen to find the intruder to your taste, he may write the veriest balderdash and you'll think it pleasant enough. And conversely, let the fellow show an unwelcome face to you—let him be snivelling, or pompous, or priggish, or whatever you like least, and although his writings combine the virtues of all the gods in the literary pantheon, you will swear they are worthless, and vote to padlock the author's typewriter.

It may be that there are ironclad souls who are impervious to such seductions. I am not one of them. I have liked scores of indifferent books merely because the people who wrote them stepped out of their pages in a friendly guise. I shall doubtless continue to sin in this fashion for the rest of my life, and I shall never feel ashamed.

So when I praise *The Selbys* by Anne Green (Dutton. $2.50), I do so in full awareness that it is not solely the considerable merits of that agreeable book which I am extolling. In cold fact, it is familiar, even threadbare stuff of which Miss Green has made her story. Little Barbara, who comes from her native Savannah to live with her expatriate aunt and uncle, who swallows Paris at a gulp after fearing overlong to taste it, who becomes involved with the incredibly earnest George to the verge of scandal, and later with that excellent young man Michel to and over the verge of matrimony; whose love affair sends a quartet of people madly scampering to America and back, until, with the assistance of the egregious Berry the marriage knot is tied—she and her adventures have been recounted more than once. Even that worthy couple, Uncle George and Aunt Virginia—the Selbys of the title—through whose shrewd and charitable eyes so much of the action is viewed, are not character creations of the first water. Even the fact that the book is so well

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done—that the narrative dances, the talk is sprightly, the people so skilfully manipulated that they manage to take you in and persuade you for a moment that they really do exist—all this is no more than adroit and amiable trifling. But behind these enjoyable mannequins and their artfully concocted adventures there is apparent, although never obtrusively, a mocking friendly spirit which I take to be that of the author. It is that urbane attitude of indulgence toward the people of the tale that gives the book its savor.

One could wish that a little urbanity had gone to the making of *Trumpet in the Dust*, the robust and quite absorbing first novel of Gene Fowler (Liveright. $2.50). Here too is a book that is better than its materials. The stormy, irresolute, passion-driven romantic trying blunderingly to find out what life is all about is the hero of almost every biographical and autobiographical novel that has appeared in the last two decades. Nothing that happens to him here strikes the reader's mind with the force of a new experience. And yet the tale is told so vigorously, is tricked out with such excellent bits of reporting, and is on the whole so honest, even in the author's obvious sympathy with his soul-thumping hero, that one is caught and held by the sheer momentum of the story. There are moments when the book has a very real dignity of its own, there are others when it is the merest fustian. But even its weakest scenes, those passages in which Gordon Dole strikes an attitude and my-Gods childishly about the state of his soul, do not rob the book of its interest or of a certain obvious if unidentifiable authenticity.

It is now half a dozen years since Robert Nathan raided the Old Testament and thus opened up a fruitful terrain to an army of marauding novelists. Mr. Nathan's *Jonah* was, I believe, the first of the now large group of modern novels which have dealt, not too reverently, with biblical characters; and it remains one of the best of these, just as to my thinking it is his own best book. As in the case of almost every one of the biblical novels, the public, with singular unanimity, ignored it. There is every reason to fear that the same fate will overtake Mr. Jonathan Daniels's first novel, *Clash of Angels* (Brewer & Warren $2.50), which will be a pity, for it is a highly entertaining piece of work. Mr. Daniels has gone further back than any of his predecessors in this field, beyond Eden, in fact, to Heaven itself. But his is the Heaven of the Golden Age, before God was discovered and only angels roamed through Paradise. They are simple folk, these angels, unaware of their supernal destiny and innocent of purpose or morals, until to one of them is revealed the presence of the Great Contriver and Jehovah-God is born. Thereafter Lucifer, the protagonist of the Golden Age, is forced into hostility to his old companion, and at the end into open warfare. The book closes at precisely the point at which *Paradise Lost* begins—with the leap of the rebellious angels into the abyss.

It is symptomatic of the current state of mind that such a book as this could be written and published without any attitudinizing on the part of the publisher or the author. Five years ago, had any publisher been bold enough to put such perilous stuff between covers, he would have made a great parade of his temerity. He would have plastered the jacket with the words "daring" and "audacious" and he would almost certainly have printed somewhere an assurance to the squeamish that in spite of the unconventional treatment of his theme the author's attitude was really profoundly reverent. But here are Messrs. Brewer & Warren calmly and unapologetically emitting what is probably the most blasphemous legend that has been told in our generation. Here is Mr. Daniels offering as disclaimer a note that Jehovah and Lucifer are not the authentic names of any god or devil and assuming that he may therefore make free with their reputations. So his Jehovah is represented as an earnest and

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rather stupid angel who, betrayed and aggrandized by the crafty Gabriel, turns into the God of Wrath who was certainly the tribal God of early Israel and who, reputedly at least, is still highly regarded by millions of church members. One wonders just what the Southern Baptistry will make of it. For myself I find it thoroughly entertaining and on the whole capably done. Removed from its association with biblical tradition, it assumes dignified proportions as a philosophic fairy-tale: a sensitive and charmingly told allegory of the perpetual conflict between the hedonist and the person with a moral axe to grind.

If, as her title indicates, it was Miss Alice Glasgow's intention in her novel *Bright Tiger* (Dial Press. $2.50) to write a history of Tammany Hall in its early days, she abandoned the plan midway of her story in favor of a closer concentration upon the social history of the period. Tammany, it is true, figures largely in the background of the book, and Tweed appears several times in momentary vivid glimpses. But this is not at all the novel of politics; it is not even, whatever the author's intent, primarily or essentially an historic novel. The scene and the atmosphere of New York in the sixties are admirably created, and the events of the time are skilfully employed as factors in the lives of her characters. Yet it is to these characters that the story belongs, and on them Miss Glasgow has expended what, unless I am much mistaken, is a decidedly exceptional talent. She exhibits at the outset of her career a marked gift for quick and telling portraiture.

In *East Wind: West Wind* (John Day. $2.50), Pearl S. Buck tells the story of the conflict between the old and new in Chinese family life. Writing from a profound knowledge of China and its people she has none the less managed to keep her story free from too explicit exposition, rather letting her characters and their situation speak for themselves. In consequence the pathetic struggle of Kwei-lan to adapt herself to the customs of her Westernized husband becomes the stuff of a delicately appealing drama. It is unfortunate, I think, that Miss Buck should have introduced further complications into her book by the introduction of another Westernized Chinese, Kwei-lan's brother, with his white wife. In doing so she allows the racial question to usurp the place of dramatic values, and correspondingly sacrifices much of the beauty and effectiveness of her book.

The publishers of the "$5000 English Prize Novel", *The Seventh Gate* by Muriel Harris (Harpers. $2.50), are discreetly inexplicit about the nature of the contest in which it was honored. We are told that the judges were Sheila Kaye-Smith, Hugh Walpole and Frank Swinnerton, but when or by whom the contest was held we are not informed. Not that it matters. The book, despite the ingenious variation of the Trilby theme on which it is based and the close observation on which even the least important scenes are grounded, does not quite come off. It is a little difficult to believe in the miracle by which Catharine Troon is transformed from a drab nonentity into a gifted and alluring woman. Over-elaboration of detail, which only talent of a high order such as Virginia Woolf possesses could make endurable, frets the reader's patience; and long before the story has approached its climax the reader's interest has evaporated.

Among the more negligible books of the current season I would list *Harm's Way* by Roberts Tapley (Knopf. $2.50), a bewildered novel about a young man bent on cultivating his moral nature in an indifferent age; *Guests of Summer* by Paul M. Fulcher (MacMillan. $2.50), which, beginning well, loses itself in a morass of romantic moralizing; and *Men in Shirt Sleeves* by Benvenuto Sheard (Viking. $2.50), which is either an attempted travesty upon the school of fantastic sophistication or a new and more wayward addition to that school. This too does not matter.

GUY HOLT

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

Ten new titles popping up in the Monthly Score are an event. And, one may truthfully comment, it's about time! In fiction, especially, there has been a dearth of really good books until the spring flood burst the dam and almost submerged us with novels worth reading. Then, of course, this report takes up a month's slack, so the fifty percent shift in the lists isn't really as sudden as it seems at first glance. Nevertheless, the stability of the General list as compared with the record of the Novels, again points the admonition to authors that if they want everybody in the world to read their books and keep on reading them forever they'd better write biography or philosophy or travel books.

—F. P. S.

NOVELS

1. EXILE *	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
2. THE WOMAN OF ANDROS *	*Thornton Wilder*	BONI
3. CIMARRON *	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
4. THE DOOR *	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	FARRAR & RINEHART
5. ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
6. CORONET	*Manuel Komroff*	COWARD-MCCANN
7. THE GREAT MEADOW *	*Elizabeth Madox Roberts*	VIKING
8. YOUNG MAN OF MANHATTAN	*Katharine Brush*	FARRAR & RINEHART
9. A FAREWELL TO ARMS	*Ernest Hemingway*	SCRIBNER'S
10. PURE GOLD *	*O. E. Rölvaag*	HARPERS
11. PASSION FLOWER *	*Kathleen Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
12. A LANTERN IN HER HAND	*Bess Streeter Aldrich*	APPLETON

GENERAL

1. NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
2. THE ART OF THINKING	*Ernest Dimnet*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
3. BYRON *	*André Maurois*	APPLETON
4. HENRY THE EIGHTH	*Francis Hackett*	LIVERIGHT
5. A PREFACE TO MORALS	*Walter Lippmann*	MACMILLAN
6. THE TRAGIC ERA	*Claude G. Bowers*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
7. TWELVE AGAINST THE GODS *	*William Bolitho*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
8. JOURNEY'S END	*R. C. Sherriff*	BRENTANO
9. LINCOLN *	*Emil Ludwig*	LITTLE, BROWN
10. THE UNIVERSE AROUND US	*Sir James Jeans*	MACMILLAN
11. THE MANSIONS OF PHILOSOPHY	*Will Durant*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
12. STRANGE INTERLUDE	*Eugene O'Neill*	LIVERIGHT

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score*

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